



Putting Big-Ticket
Donations
To Work



REACH MAGAZINE

Vol. 8 • No. 1
Spring 2021

REACH Magazine is produced semi-annually for the friends, faculty and staff of TCC by the District Office of Communications, Public Relations & Marketing.

For comments or address changes, please email pr.marketing@tccd.edu.

Editor-In-Chief

Suzanne Groves
*Executive Director of
Communications, PR & Marketing*

Editorial Staff

Gina Brasseur
Reginald Lewis
Kendra Prince
Jody Wasson

Photographers

Glen Ellman
DeeDra Parrish

Contributors

Dionne Bagsby-Jones
Bill Lace
Brian Melton
Rita L. .B. Parson
Liz Robbins
Paul Sturiale

TCC | Tarrant
County
College
SUCCESS WITHIN REACH.

Equal Opportunity/Equal Access Institution

CHANCELLOR'S CORNER

With the emergence of Spring and positive news regarding increased vaccinations and lower hospitalization rates from COVID-19, we are pleased to open our campus doors to in-person instruction beginning this Fall! Recognizing that this virus continues to pose challenges, we remain confident that by adhering to CDC, state and local health guidelines, our students, faculty and staff will soon be able to enjoy what was so sorely missed this past year: opportunities to interact, connect, collaborate and grow face-to-face. The same cross-functional teams who last year shifted into high gear to ensure academic and operational continuity for the College are now working on protocols related to our campus return, taking into consideration the additional personal support our students and staff may need after a year of earning and learning at home. We will remain cautious, but it's nice to feel optimistic, too.

While TCC joined every other higher education institution in the nation in navigating uncharted territory last year, the new challenges we addressed did not keep us from continued progress and achievement as One College that is Student-Ready to Serve Our Community. Thanks to the \$825 million bond package approved by Tarrant County voters in November 2019, significant work has begun on our Northwest Campus redevelopment and Southeast Campus expansion. This generous bond package will allow TCC to ensure we are creating campuses that truly meet future needs, informed in large part by recommendations from our eight Principle teams. We recognize that our community shares in our desire to provide best-in-class learning environments for students now and many years to come, and wants to understand how their investment is being used, so we've developed a public website specific to the bond package. To keep up with the exciting progress being made, visit <https://sites.tccd.edu/bond/>.

As TCC persisted, it comes as no surprise that our students did, too. Though we did experience a slight decrease in enrollment consistent with community colleges around the nation, those students who transitioned quickly to a fully remote learning experience were able to persevere and succeed. Next month, at our first-ever "Continuous Rolling" (and socially distanced) Commencement Ceremony at Dickies Arena, many of our spring candidates for degree and certificates will join with those who earned credentials in the summer and fall of 2020 to have their awards conferred. This spring, we expect to award more than 3,000 associate degrees (including about 540 Collegiate High School graduates) and about 1,000 certificates to our Career and Technical students. These numbers represent a potential 5.5 percent increase of all awards compared to Spring 2020 (when we were unable to host a Commencement Ceremony) and clearly underscore the commitment of our students, faculty and staff to finding Success Within Reach, regardless of the obstacles they had to overcome.

For many of our students, the pandemic exacerbated their already precarious financial situations and might have caused them to "stop out," were it not for the \$16.1 million in CARES Act HEERF I grants TCC distributed to 23,088 students beginning last Spring. Earlier this year, TCC received an additional \$49.7 million from the recently authorized Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) 2021, Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (HEERF II). Of that allotment, up to \$35 million will be used to provide HEERF II student grants to students with demonstrated "exceptional financial need." This grant — \$1,000 per student, per term — is intended to expedite assistance to those most in need and will be offered in the Summer and Fall terms as well.

Many have grown weary of the term, "unprecedented," particularly as it relates to this past year and the challenges we all have experienced. That said, this also has been an unprecedented year in terms of the national rankings TCC has achieved for excellence, service and value. Of particular note:

- TradeCollege.org ranked TCC #1 on its list of U.S. community colleges and trade schools that offer degrees in the trades. Overall, TCC earned 24 awards on the organization's 2021 Trade College Search ranking;
- *Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine* named TCC one of the nation's Top 25 Community Colleges for Hispanic students;
- Intelligent.com ranked TCC #11 on the Top 50 Community Colleges list with the distinction of "Best Short-Term Certificates";
- Business Degree Central ranked TCC #34 on its list of Most Popular Online Business Schools, with the #1 spot for Most Popular Online Business Degree Schools in Texas and the #2 spot for Most Popular Online Accounting Undergraduate Certificate Schools in the Southwest Region;
- And, *Forbes* named TCC one of America's 2021 Best Mid-Size Employers, ranking us 164th out of 500 nationwide employers within the 1,000- to 5,000-employee category. This is the first time TCC has received this accolade.

We could not achieve these distinctions, and so many more, without the dedication of our faculty, staff, Trustees, donors and community partners. To see a full list of TCC's accolades, visit: <https://www.tccd.edu/why-choosetcc/#recognition>

I believe gratitude is fundamental to individual and collective success. While we always appreciate the support and collaboration we receive from our community, now more than ever, we thank you for your continued confidence in our mission and in our efforts to help our students — and our region — flourish.



Eugene Giovannini

Chancellor, Tarrant County College

CONTENTS



**TARRANT
TO & THROUGH
PARTNERSHIP**



2

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

TCC joins community effort to foster training and skills needed by the regional and national workforce

**DAN LUFKIN
Q & A**



4

MAKING CONNECTIONS IS JOB ONE FOR TCC SOUTH'S NEW PRESIDENT

Q&A with Dan Lufkin



6

CORPORATE SOLUTIONS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUSES ON CUSTOMIZATION

Dedicated division responds to workforce development demand with value-based solutions

**BUILDING
RELATIONSHIPS**



9

CONNECTING THE DOTS

For TCC's Executive Vice President of Advancement, TCC's impact in the community comes down to building relationships



10

COVER STORY: DONATIONS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Partnerships play a critical role in educational program continuity and effectiveness



**TEACHERS
INSPIRED BY
TEACHERS**

16

A PASSION TO TEACH

Inspired by teachers who made a difference in their lives, students seek to do the same for others through TCC's Teacher Education program



18

IT'S AUTOMAGICAL!

TCC's invisible backbone maintains operations while building bridges to the future



48

SUPPORTING ASPIRING TEACHERS' EDUCATION IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

Evelyn Doyle and Renee Ware equip future educators through their donations

BREAKING DOWN

TCC JOINS COMMUNITY EFFORT TO FOSTER TRAINING AND SKILLS NEEDED BY THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL WORKFORCE

By Reginald Lewis

Today, getting ahead means heading to college. With more jobs requiring some sort of postsecondary credential, filling those positions with skilled talent is critical to the regional and national economies.

Currently, 39 percent of Tarrant County adults hold an associate degree or higher, but 65 percent of jobs in the modern economy require some sort of postsecondary certification, according to multiple reports.

To address this demand, Tarrant County College has joined the Tarrant To & Through Partnership (T3), a community-wide collaborative effort focused on ensuring that more Tarrant County students earn postsecondary credentials and have the training and skills to thrive in today's workforce.

"Investing in access and completion for under-resourced populations will have a long-term transformational affect within the Fort Worth and Tarrant County region," said Jan Clayton, vice president for student development services at TCC Northwest. "Research indicates that early exposure to higher education increases the number of students who enter colleges and universities and obtain degrees or certificates."

Under this partnership, TCC is providing equitable educational opportunities by providing various student success initiatives to ensure first-generation and diverse student populations enjoy equitable educational opportunities. Clayton leads a team of TCC educators and leaders collaborating with T3.

"First-generation college students need to build a literacy around the college experience that includes understanding how to navigate structural barriers, processes and how to develop college readiness skills," Clayton explained. "In fact, some of this work is best accomplished by initiating it at the middle-school level."

Launched in fall 2020, T3 is a coalition of educators, leaders and everyday advocates working with K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions and community partners to improve student outcomes in Tarrant County. Current higher education partners include TCC, Tarleton State University, Texas Christian University, Texas Wesleyan University, The University of Texas at Arlington and the University of North Texas at Dallas.

T3's Director of College & Career Success Rachael Capua sees the organization as a connector to key services across the county. "This effort will be a key player in boosting the Dallas-Fort Worth

region's workforce readiness efforts by providing and testing an innovative combination of college and career coaching/advising, tuition assistance, increased exposure to industry for students and a robust technology platform to support and track students," she said.

Leveraging national best practices and building on existing efforts, T3 is dedicated to improving student outcomes in three primary areas:

- Graduating more students from high school who are college-, career- and military-ready.
- Helping more students enroll in a postsecondary pathway with confidence.
- Empowering more students to persist and earn a degree or credential and enter the workforce prepared for success.

During the program's first year, approximately 24,000 students at 21 Fort Worth ISD high schools were eligible to participate in this innovative program. Of those, 83 percent are from low-income households. The good news is that the program is free to all eligible students.

One Diamond Hill-Jarvis High School staff member who participated in an anonymous survey believes the T3 program is a game changer for many students and their families. "[The T3 program] has helped students realize that the pathway to continuing their education can be attainable within their community, especially since a majority of the students come from a low-income background," the staffer said.

In order to become a T3 scholar and unlock all benefits associated with the program, students simply take the T3 Pledge and agree to graduate from high school, submit financial aid paperwork, complete community service and apply to a T3 partner college or university. This year's T3 scholars planning to attend TCC will receive their formal introduction to the community college through a summer bridge program.

In the fall, each T3 scholar will receive a "last dollar" tuition-free scholarship to TCC for up to eight consecutive semesters or the completion of a certificate or associate degree. The scholarship will cover any remaining tuition costs after all Pell grants and/or other federal, state or institutional aid have been applied. Students also will have access to persistence coaching and transfer services support to ensure a smooth transition to a four-year partner university.

BARRIERS

“The T3 Program will increase the number of high school graduates, increase access to higher education and increase the number of degreed and credentialed graduates entering the workforce,” said Clayton. “Healthier communities, stronger economies and a more engaged electorate are some of the benefits.”

Earning a college degree or certificate can have a significant impact on a student’s career and life. Associate degree holders, for example, earn \$7,300 more (and up) per year than their peers with just a high school education, which translates into more than \$293,000 over a typical 40-year career, according to a Northeastern University report. That’s why high school students need a clear and affordable pathway to pursue higher education.

Local employers have a high number of unfilled jobs in various sectors due to the ongoing skills gap. Education leaders are betting this innovative partnership will help close that gap.

“This is a personal mission,” said FWISD Chief Innovation Officer David Saenz. “This is the story of my family and countless families that look like me. That is my driver. Postsecondary success is ultimately to and through college or postsecondary credential, which will give students the tools necessary to affect change for their family and generations to come.”

For more information about T3, visit <https://t3partnership.org/>.



**TARRANT
TO & THROUGH
PARTNERSHIP**





MAKING CONNECTIONS IS JOB ONE FOR TCC SOUTH'S NEW PRESIDENT

Q&A WITH DAN LUFKIN

By Bill Lace

Dan Lufkin's career has placed him at just about all points on the educational ladder, teaching students from first grade to community college to graduate school. His latest rung on that ladder is as president of TCC South.

Lufkin comes to TCC from Virginia's Paul D. Camp Community College, where he had been president since 2016. His other administrative stops were as vice president for student affairs at Thomas Nelson Community College and dean of enrollment management at Gateway College, where the president was Eugene Giovannini, now TCC chancellor. He has taught at Ashford University in San Diego, Calif., Mesa Community College in Arizona and Northern Arizona University.

In addition to a bachelor's degree from State University of New York at Potsdam, Lufkin earned his master's degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University and his doctorate in educational leadership and organizational leadership from Nova Southeastern University.

A few days after his appointment was announced in February, he took some time from his workday in Virginia to talk about his new post.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO IN YOUR NEW ROLE?

I'm really excited about moving into the area. I'm excited about both the area and the campus. I like the programs there and am very familiar with the work-based programs, the career and technical education. And then, I've always had a deep appreciation for liberal arts as well, and what they offer our students in terms of transfer and being exposed to a wide range of subjects. I like the size of the campus. I'm very comfortable with a campus that has 10,000 to 20,000 students. That's my real comfort zone, and I was excited to see the resources they have, especially as they relate to the new labs. There's a lot to look forward to and a lot to be excited about.

YOU'LL WANT TO ESTABLISH A RAPPORT WITH YOUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY, BUT THAT'S GOING TO BE KIND OF DIFFICULT WHEN THE PANDEMIC HAS RESULTED IN SO FEW PEOPLE ACTUALLY BEING THERE.

As my colleagues say, my super strength is my ability to connect with others and build relationships. And I do that by intentionally walking around the campus, just to make connections with individuals. I'm a very open leader. I share who I am personally. I like to talk about my family. I like to learn about other people's families and just engage in simple, but meaningful, dialogue. And that will be a challenge. However, I've learned with technology that we have to use it to the best of its ability. But I've always made myself extremely

available. So, my message to the campus community is that we can have campus-wide Zoom meetings or Microsoft Teams meetings, but that my door is always open. I share my personal cell phone number and allow individuals to call me. It's about learning what our challenges are, where our opportunities are, what our resources are and how we can best utilize those resources to serve our students and create a positive learning environment.

WHAT'S JOB ONE?

Job One, again, is just making those connections. Obviously sharing what my goals are. Really learning and listening. I want to learn what the organizational culture is. I want to learn, hear from others what those challenges are, where our greatest

strengths are, where our opportunities are and what do they see as those priorities. And once I learn what their most pressing priorities are, that's really going to shape how I move forward.

PRIOR TO YOUR APPLICATION FOR THE POSITION, WHAT DID YOU KNOW ABOUT TCC, IF ANYTHING?

All I really knew was that Dr. Giovannini had gone there and that it's a growing college—not only the College itself but the area. When you look at the demographic studies in the Mid-Atlantic you see what's called a birth dearth. There's just a declining population. But, in the Southwest, and particularly in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, you're seeing a growth in population of about 1.5 percent annually. That's what I really started looking at, not so much the College itself, but the industry that's moving into the area, that they build F-35s and locomotives there. And then, you look at TCC South and how all their programs align with that industry growth. One of my strengths is getting out in the community to meet with these business and industry leaders to make these partnerships that will be beneficial to us and them. This is just going to be a wonderful opportunity that I couldn't pass up.

SO, WHEN YOU STARTED RESEARCHING MORE ABOUT THE COLLEGE ITSELF, WHAT DID THAT RESEARCH TELL YOU?

It told me that they're investing in their students, that the College has resources and that they're willing to put resources behind the student experience. Also that the College is really investing in the professional growth and development of its faculty and staff. And in a time of declining budgets, when I saw all the investment they're making in professional development—and your people are your Number One asset—that was very attractive to me.

WHEN YOU WERE ACTUALLY HERE, ON-SITE, WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE GROUNDS AND FACILITIES?

It reminded me of a traditional liberal arts college in its architecture, where you have the big courtyard, trees and benches and the walkways. And then the academic buildings, each one represented by a different department. And what I really liked was that in the Student Center there was a representation of the different countries for international students. I think there were 70 different flags in there. I was able to experience that at Gateway when I was at Maricopa. They had a growing international program, and the value that international students bring to the overall learning experience is invaluable. And when I saw that, I was just extremely excited about the opportunity to be back on a college campus with such a diverse population.

WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE? WHEN YOU WERE INTERVIEWED, DID THEY GIVE YOU A PRETTY GOOD THIRD DEGREE?

Yeah, they asked some hard questions. And I think that hopefully, through their questioning, they were able to learn about the type of leader I am, my vision for the College and how I might handle difficult situations. It was a good experience speaking with the leadership team and the faculty members.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAMILY?

They're very excited to move. My wife grew up in Oklahoma and has a brother there who'll be about four hours away, and she's excited to move into the area so we can make some trips to visit her family. My daughter (Lily) who's 12 is a competitive dancer—extremely competitive. She's in 13 different dances right now and competes in different states and travels to compete. She

dances probably 30-plus hours a week, and she's looking forward to being in a bigger city where there's even more competition. My son, Layton, he's nine, and his passion is baseball. He loves to play baseball, but he's also a YouTube kid, right? I don't know anything about this stuff, but there's this thing called "Dude Perfect," some YouTube sensation group, and they do all these little skits and gimmicks and so forth. They're headquartered in Dallas, and he just believes that we're going to go there, we're going to knock on the door and we're going to get to meet the Dude Perfect guys.

PERSONAL INTERESTS?

I start my morning, every morning, by shooting baskets. I played college basketball. I've played basketball my whole life. I don't play competitively anymore just because my body can't withstand it, but my sanctuary is the basketball court. So, I'm up every morning at 5 a.m. I'm at the gym by 6 o'clock, and I shoot baskets for about 45 minutes. And then, I like to get in a little workout to start my day. It's just been good for me to create that balance. I consider myself a family guy. I enjoy being with my family. I enjoy going to my daughter's competitions, my son's baseball games. My wife (Catey) and I share in the traveling and the carting of kids from here to there, and we just enjoy each other. We go on family bike rides, and there are trails all over Fort Worth, so we look forward to getting on our bikes and doing that as well.

There's a lot to look forward to and a lot to be excited about.

Dan Lufkin
President, TCC South



Corporate Solutions & Economic Development Focuses on Customization

DEDICATED DIVISION RESPONDS TO
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DEMAND
WITH VALUE-BASED SOLUTIONS

By Liz Robbins, Strategic Marketing Manager

Satisfying growing workforce development demand sits at the core of TCC's mission and is central to the mission of its Corporate Solutions & Economic Development (CSED) division. Led by Executive Vice President Shannon Bryant, the division's new strategic direction is to meet companies where they are and create customized solutions to help fill and sustain their workforce pipeline.

Partnering with industry and businesses is nothing new for TCC; demand, however, has grown tremendously. According to Chancellor Eugene Giovannini, "More and more, community colleges find themselves meeting the ongoing needs of education and learning for businesses within the community. Where we have found ourselves, specifically with Corporate Solutions & Economic Development, is organizing in a manner that meets this demand," he said. The increased demand for workforce development is based on an anticipated surge in net migration—new companies and employees moving into the area.

With Fort Worth now ranked the 13th largest city in the nation and Tarrant County among the top three fastest-growing counties in Texas, corporations are actively looking west of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport to put down roots and grow. Over

the next 10 years, future job growth is predicted to reach 40 percent, which is higher than the United States average of 33.5 percent, according to bestplaces.net.

Indeed, the online source cites Tarrant County as an attractive place to relocate because it has a below-average unemployment rate of 3.5 percent (U.S. average is 3.7 percent); affordable labor with the average salary at \$57,727; and, low-cost real estate, with the average median home cost at \$218,300.

Among Tarrant County residents, 86 percent are also high school graduates or beyond, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Combine that with Tarrant County's proximity to DFW International Airport as well as access to a robust system of highways, rail and bus transportation for commuting, and it is a winning proposition for businesses looking to relocate.

"CSED was created to respond to this growth opportunity," explained Bryant, who said her goal is to help position TCC as the premier destination for workforce development in North Texas.

FOCUSING ON CUSTOMIZATION

"Our approach is what makes CSED different from other workforce development options," Bryant explained. "We understand that no two businesses are alike, and customization is important to meet



OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS,
FUTURE JOB GROWTH
IS PREDICTED TO REACH
40 PERCENT, WHICH
IS HIGHER THAN THE
UNITED STATES AVERAGE
OF 33.5 PERCENT.

specific needs. We also know that businesses want a practical application, not theory. Our process includes customization using examples only relevant to the business and work at hand, tailored through facilitation, coaching and consulting work.”

In this spirit, CSED adheres to the methodology of andragogy application, recognizing the need for adults to learn in their own way. According to the American educator Malcolm Knowles, there are varying principles as it relates to adult learners versus child learners (pedagogy), including:

- Self-concept—adult learners are self-directed.
- Experience—adults use experience and past lessons as the foundation of their basis for learning.
- Relevant experience—adults learn based on what is most relevant to their professional and personal life.
- Problem-centered—adults look at learning from the lens of not just context, but the need to gain knowledge, apply skills and solve problems.
- Motivation—for adults, the motivation to learn is internal.

CSED experts will apply this methodology to all customized solutions, using the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation) model to develop content that is clear and effective to the needs of learners and the businesses they serve.

MEETING COMPANIES WHERE THEY ARE

CSED solutions are specific to economic development, employers, individual development and industry associations, with key areas of focus including:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Entrepreneurship
- Financial Services
- Health Care
- Information Technology
- Online Skill Building Learning Opportunities
- Organizational Effectiveness & Leadership
- Other customized needs

“CSED experts will be working alongside company resources—‘meeting them where they are’—to custom design everything from leadership development initiatives to new process flows,” Bryant explained. “We’ll be focusing both on effectiveness, which involves the more abstract, softer concepts, and efficiency, or the harder, more straightforward sciences, including LEAN production methods and a growing demand for safety programs.”

She added that the division also will be working through industry partnerships to provide sought-after certifications and other services.” For instance, CSED has partnered to offer an asynchronous review program for the Securities Industry Essentials (SIE) exam prep. The SIE exam, which



was rolled out in 2018 by The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), is considered the gold standard for finance professionals to demonstrate competency in their industry.

BUILDING ON TCC STRENGTHS

Ultimately, CSED is all about leveraging the abundant expertise that characterizes TCC, applying a customized approach to meet specific business needs. As one of the nation's 20-largest higher education institutions, TCC is uniquely positioned to support the ongoing needs of businesses not only in Tarrant County, but across North Texas and beyond.

As a testament to this, TCC was recently ranked #1 among U.S. community colleges and trade schools, according to the 2021 Trade College Search ranking analysis produced by TradeCollege.org, which teamed with College Factual, a leading higher education analytics company, drawing on data from the U.S. Department of Education, including the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), College Scorecard and National Loan Data System (NSLDS).

Along with the top overall position, TCC also earned 24 additional awards, including:

- #1 in Best Architectural Engineering Technology Associate Degree Trade Schools in the Southwest Region
- #1 in Best Construction Engineering Technology Undergraduate Certificate Trade Schools in Texas
- #1 in Best Electronics Engineering Technology Undergraduate Certificate Trade Schools in the Southwest Region
- #2 in Best Mechanic & Repair Technologies Trade Schools in Texas

“This recognition reinforces and supports why TCC is such an ideal choice for workforce development,” Bryant said.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Bryant's takeaway message to corporations is simple. “We want organizations to know that we approach learning and development as a strategic investment in people—their greatest resource. Knowledgeable, skilled people are the lifeblood of long-term workforce sustainability. Without them, growth is not possible.

“If we are successful, we will provide value to people's lives, which strengthens communities for us all.” She added that this fits with CSED's mission to provide customized solutions and relevant learning and development programs to ensure the surrounding community has an educated, skilled workforce.

“We are already known as experts in our community; now, we are bringing this together through CSED, casting a wider, more strategic net.”

Our approach is what makes CSED different from other workforce development options. We understand that no two businesses are alike, and customization is important to meet specific needs. We also know that businesses want a practical application, not theory. Our process includes customization using examples only relevant to the business and work at hand, tailored through facilitation, coaching and consulting work.

Shannon Bryant
Executive Vice President
Corporate Solutions &
Economic Development

For more information about Corporate Solutions & Economic Development, see: <https://www.tccd.edu/community/corporate-solutions-economic-level>

Connecting the Dots

FOR TCC'S EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF ADVANCEMENT, TCC'S IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY COMES DOWN TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

By Paul Sturiale

During her 23 years as a fundraising and development professional, Kristen Bennett, Tarrant County College's new Executive Vice President of Advancement, has learned that sustained success is built upon connecting the dots.

Bennett joined TCC in 2020 as part of Chancellor Eugene Giovannini's vision to strengthen TCC's impact by enhancing the school's ties with its students, alumni, donors and the general community. This process also includes more closely integrating the Tarrant County College Foundation into the central fabric of the school and the community.

"We'll be making a transition from the old-school foundation concept into an office of proactive advancement and advocacy, instead of the traditional approach of simply going out and getting donations," said Fred Schmidt, foundation director of development, corporate & industry partnerships. "Advancement has a much more global perspective and a greater connection to the College. The interaction with donors, students and the community is more relational than transactional."

Bennett is literally building TCC's advancement initiative from scratch. Since joining TCC after a successful five-year stint as the chief advancement officer at Trinity Valley Community College in Athens, Texas, she has focused on creating the infrastructure for her initial five-year growth plan, which then will set the stage for a longer advancement initiative.

An important element of the initial activities, said Bennett, will be creating a variety of pathways for students and alumni to become more engaged with TCC and each other. "There is so much untapped potential in each of these groups. We'll stress engaging the alumni beyond making financial donations. Perhaps it will be as a coach-mentor or to volunteer for a special project. There will really be an infinite set of opportunities to become involved with TCC," she said.

Connecting those dots in a very human way will naturally lead to higher donations to the school and Foundation because, as Bennett said, "People give to people, not organizations. The more you engage your alumni and friends, the increased giving grows exponentially. They give to people they have relationships with, not organizations. People may give to organizations in a transactional way. But I'm really

about sustained giving that actually builds programs and transforms generations of individuals."

Her vision of involvement also extends to the Foundation's leadership. Bennett sees a greater degree of personal involvement from Board members, students, educators, community leaders and everyday citizens through *ad hoc* committees and special task forces as an important building block in her advancement infrastructure. "We want representation, not just individuals of wealth who give philanthropic dollars. We want individuals who are connectors, are community leaders. We're also going to add faculty and staff representation on our Board and even student representation. I want a collective group of individuals from all backgrounds so that when we're looking at programs, services and projects, and we're trying to look at everything comprehensively, we have as many ideas and thoughts as possible," said Bennett.

Another important connection will be Shannon Bryant, executive vice president for TCC's newly formed Corporate Solutions and Economic Development division. Bryant describes her group as "the business face of the College to serve local businesses by providing custom solutions to their needs. We will be establishing very deep relationships with companies in Tarrant County in relation to their business needs. We want to hold TCC out as the workforce solutions provider for the entire county." As such, she will be working with owners and senior leaders of companies, who are key elements of Bennett's overall strategy.

Bennett and Bryant see working closely together to build TCC's presence in and service to the business community as a natural synergy between our groups," Bennett said.

They also agree on the goal they have set for their groups so that they reflect TCC's commitment to the community and its students. They both use the term "being an office of excellence." And, Bennett said, "making a life-changing impact."

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



BEING AN
OFFICE OF
EXCELLENCE AND
MAKING A
LIFE-CHANGING
IMPACT

Donations



**Make the
Difference**



PARTNERSHIPS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CONTINUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

By Brian Melton

People love freebies. Perfume samples, event tickets, complimentary magazines—folks will happily line up for pretty much anything at the mere mention of “free.”

But a fire truck? Jet aircraft engines? Diesel powerplants? Sure, they’re way cool, but most people won’t exactly find them sitting on their neighbor’s curb. And, what could a person possibly DO with stuff like that, anyway?

How about, prepare students for high-wage, high-demand careers in fields like firefighting, aircraft maintenance and diesel engine repair?

Big-ticket donations like these are heaven-sent for TCC’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. Armed with freebies from business partners like American Airlines, LG Electronics, Ford and many more, TCC can provide career and technical education to help build a strong workforce prepared to meet current and future regional and state economic needs.

In fact, TradeCollege.org recently ranked TCC one of the nation’s top community colleges offering associate degrees in the trades.

Here’s how donations make a difference.

FIGHTING FIRE WITH GENEROSITY

TCC’s Public Safety Training Center (PSTC) at TCC Northwest offers programs in Law Enforcement and Fire Rescue, which includes aspiring and veteran firefighters, regional fire departments and other first responders.

The firefighting component focuses on realistic scenarios in a simulated city environment where students can practice live firefighting skills amid streets, homes, an apartment-hotel complex and high-rise buildings. There’s even a simulated train derailment with hazardous materials combustion.

“We’ve received significant donations in the past, for which we’re very grateful,” said Steve Keller, PSTC director. “The City of Grapevine donated a 75-foot-long ladder truck, which had passed its serviceable life for them, but began a new life with us.”

“Quite honestly, however, sometimes donations arrive out of the blue and just fall in our laps, which is really exciting,” he added.

He’s referring to a donation from Dutch-based Holmatro, a worldwide manufacturer of cutting-edge hydraulic rescue and industrial equipment. “Their electric/hydraulic tools, called e-draulic, set up faster than traditional hydraulics and allow better response times,” he said. “They gave us a brand-new set worth about \$50,000 and lifetime free maintenance.”

Another surprise gift: a \$50,000 donation from the Wells Fargo Foundation to help build a Fire Behavior Simulator Lab (FBSL), sometimes referred to as a flashover chamber. “We were planning to build the lab on our own, but then our TCC Foundation office called and said they might be able to arrange some assistance,” said Keller.



“Students can experience real fire conditions of high heat and low visibility in a relatively safe environment,” added William Pearson, fire academy coordinator. “By recognizing pre-flashover conditions, students better understand the importance of proper ventilation, water application and the importance of properly wearing PPE (personal protective equipment). Hostile fire situations can quickly turn deadly, so it’s vitally important for the safety of every cadet we train, and we’re very thankful for the donation.”

“Without donations like these, we wouldn’t be able to do what we do for our students,” said Sonya Brown, dean of public services, social and behavioral sciences. “It’s just that simple and absolutely that important for our communities.”

THE SKY’S THE LIMIT

Another popular course offering: aircraft maintenance. Manuals and textbooks are good starting points, but understanding how to tear apart, then reassemble, a machine that generates 50,000 pounds of thrust is essential in this line of work.

“We’ve received tons of stuff over the years,” said James (Clint) Grant, divisional dean for aviation, business & logistics at TCC Northwest. “American and Southwest

controls for an actual flight. Fortunately, there’s no shortage of available aircraft.

“Bell Flight gave us a lab equipment for the new Non-Destructive Testing and Inspection and Evaluation program recently,” Grant said. “And over Christmas, we received a twin-engine Beechcraft B60 Duke. We have about a dozen aircraft, five of which were donated.”

Grant noted that TCC’s Aviation Maintenance program, located at Alliance Airport in the Erma C. Johnson Hadley Northwest Center of Excellence for Aviation, Transportation and Logistics, has been around as long as TCC itself.

“We’re well-established, so there’s no shortage of industry partners willing to donate,” he said. “American and Southwest are huge donors, but we also receive donations from many smaller specialty companies, like Byam Propeller Services over at Meacham Field. And, just a few weeks ago, a former student called me and said he’d like to donate an airplane. So it’s nice that our reputation gives us a solid business presence when companies consider donating used equipment.”

COOL TRENDS, HEAVY GEAR, HOT ENGINES

When it comes to keeping cool, Europe and other parts of the world prefer what’s called “mini-split” HVAC



have both donated engines from 767s and 737s that were no longer cost-efficient to repair. We have, for example, two of the world’s most popular and utilized engines, the Pratt & Whitney JT-8D. We’ve also got an Airbus CFM56 and a GE CF6, which powers a wide variety of civilian aircraft.”

The same hands-on principle applies to TCC’s Professional Pilot Program (incidentally, the only community college program in Texas offering pilot training). Ground training is essential, and simulators work wonderfully, but there’s nothing like taking the

technology over American systems. Rooms have their own temperature zones without bulky ductwork, and the units are quiet, energy efficient and filter out allergens, too.

No surprise, then, that the devices are finally starting to take off here. To serve this burgeoning need, TCC South in 2018 partnered with LG Electronics USA and North Texas-based AC Supply Company to create a residential mockup space at the school’s Center of Excellence for Energy Technology. More than \$25,000 worth of equipment was donated by LG Electronics.

“We also built a commercial equipment

demonstration on multiple zone controls, and between the contractors and LG, we received nearly \$64,000 of donations and in-kind service,” said Jeff Rector, department chair, Building Technologies. “This is a growing market and we’re at the leading edge.”

Rector also plays a pivotal role in arranging donations for the heavy equipment operator program, which trains entry-level workers for jobs in a variety of construction industries.

“It’s hard to practice with a bulldozer in someone’s front yard,” he laughed. “So we teamed up with Everman ISD, which rents us 42 acres for a dollar a year, and most recently with Archer Western Construction, who donated about \$10,000 worth of rental equipment for the course. We dig a bunch of holes, fill them up again, and Archer picks up all the gear when we’re done.”

Another popular area of focus: automotive.

“It’s one of our more popular programs,” said Jim Martin, department chair of Automotive Technology at TCC South. “Toyota, Ford, Chrysler and Mercedes are just some of the big names in the industry who donate engines, transmissions, brakes, tools, supplies, parts and other automotive systems to our program, giving students real-world training opportunities.”

Case in point—Toyota’s T-TEN (Technician Training and Education Network) program has donated about

Ford’s ACE (Automotive Career Exploration) and Chrysler’s CAP (Career Automotive Program) comprise the second component of TCC’s automotive program with technology contributions. “We have a long and mutually successful relationship with Ford. In fact, they gave us a brand-new, \$20,000 diesel engine that students can tear down and rebuild to learn the intricacies of that equipment,” Martin said.

Another big name is coming online in the fall: Mercedes-Benz is contributing scanning devices and tools for their high-end products.

A third program component encompasses CREF (Collision Repair Education Foundation), which helps students become familiar with the tools of the trade—sandpaper, body filler, paint, spray guns, hoses, air regulators, masks, respirators—all the technology accoutrements needed to get vehicles back in shape and many of which are donated.

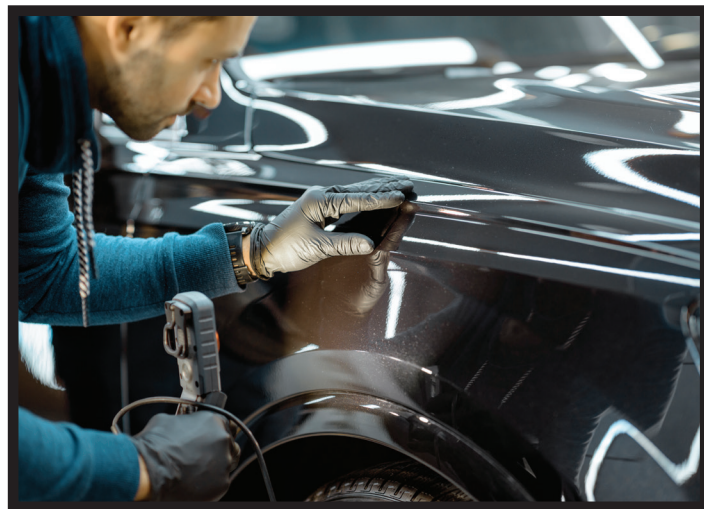
Martin said TCC’s automotive program welcomes between 100-120 new students every fall and in a year, they’re productive and rarin’ to go.

“Our partnerships with all these companies and organizations means that we can train people to get good-paying careers and be productive members of our community,” said Martin. “It’s a real win-win.”

THE ROLE OF THE TCC FOUNDATION

“It’s always a pleasure to assist TCC faculty members and program leaders in building further support opportunities with business and industry partners,” said Joe McIntosh, executive director of the TCC Foundation. He notes that the Foundation plays a big role in expanding industry and corporate relationships, which often include TCC program advisory council members and service organizations.

“We’re there to assist wherever we can,” he said. “Through these generous gifts, we can advance workforce development and strengthen our regional economy. It’s really the relationships between the faculty and their contacts in the industries that greatly help to bring in the donations. It’s all about partnerships and our CTE program has some of the best in the business.”



30 vehicles ranging from used, low-mileage Corolla sedans to full-size Tundra pickups so that students can disassemble and reassemble engines, transmissions, suspensions and other systems.

“Toyota is more than happy to invest so that their dealerships have a steady supply of trained technicians,” said Martin. “When they relocated their headquarters from Southern California to North Texas a few years ago, they were looking for a regional training partner. They saw value in what we were doing and now, they’re our flagship program and largest donor.”



Without donations like these, we wouldn’t be able to do what we do for our students. It’s just that simple and absolutely that important for our communities

Sonya Brown
Dean of Public Services,
Social and Behavioral Sciences

LEARNING WHILE EARNING

TCC PROVIDES AREA BUSINESSES WITH EMPLOYEES WHO GROW INTO JUST WHAT THEY NEED

By Dionne Bagsby-Jones

Apprenticeships offer an alternate pathway to success for many who are uninspired by the prospect of a long, traditional educational journey. Despite their association with craft professions and trades like construction, plumbing and automotive mechanics, the current registered apprenticeship model is also suitable for modern technical roles such as digital marketer, building automation systems technician and healthcare technician fields such as dental assisting. Apprenticeship programs provide an opportunity to funnel candidates into well-compensated careers without the added strain of debt, because employers provide living wages while they conduct on-the-job training and mentorship. Also, apprenticeships offer an unparalleled opportunity for employers to cultivate employees who understand their unique culture and needs. “A job may seem standard to an outsider, but the best result calls for special attention and problem-solving to meet the business’ needs,” said Wahiba Belakoua, TCC coordinator of apprenticeships. “Apprenticeships are the best way for an employer to get someone who does exactly what they need.”

Increasing the percentage of workforce entrants in registered apprenticeships can benefit the revitalization of the middle class by closing the gaps created by middle-skilled workers who are retiring, as well as the middle-skill roles emerging in technological fields and other non-traditional disciplines. The registered apprenticeship model provides the employer with an opportunity to create a custom vocational training program that will address a wide variety of interests and workforce needs. Each program requires a minimum of 144 hours of technical instruction that addresses theoretical knowledge and a minimum of 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning by the employer.

Registered apprenticeships offer a bridge that connects the employers, potential and incumbent workers and higher education institutions. Labeaud Colbert, CEO of Labeaud LLC, said, “Apprenticeship is a chance for me to create a learning opportunity for my staff and fill a fulltime position.”

Community colleges like TCC are an ideal third-party partner to facilitate the successful implementation of apprenticeship programs because these institutions can offer support to both apprentices and the businesses that employ them. TCC assists its business partners by offering program development services, taking over the administrative aspect of running the apprenticeship program and facilitating the recruitment of qualified individuals from among its students. Many of

the courses at TCC are stackable, which lead to degrees and certificates students can earn over time, resulting in increased marketability for employment plus higher wages. Additionally, the courses required by an apprentice’s employer-sponsored training can be applied towards a TCC certificate. Also important is the value apprentices may find in developing a rapport with instructors who have industry experience.

Recent years have seen the proliferation of fraudulent and meaningless certifications, particularly in digital skills, because of the ease with which people can create seemingly official websites and portals. As accredited educational bodies, community colleges like TCC are uniquely suited to help apprentices evaluate the relative value of any certificate they may earn by keeping an eye to wider industry trends and their familiarity with meaningful accreditation. Additionally, employers can take comfort in knowing the instruction given to the apprentice meets high-quality educational and industry standards.

TCC has a longstanding partnership with Workforce Solutions of Tarrant County, also known as the local workforce board, in addition to area businesses and industry associations. As such, TCC plays an instrumental role in the vitality of the Tarrant County economic landscape.

The TCC Registered Apprenticeship Program is a new initiative for the College, which requires the creative application of the College’s traditional strengths. TCC always strives to be at the forefront of educating and training students and incumbent workers. TCC will continue to aid students and workers through its newest relationship with the U. S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Apprenticeships. “The U. S. Department of Labor has partnered with Tarrant County College to integrate Registered Apprenticeship Programs throughout the College. We are working hard to meet business needs and prepare students/apprentices for successful careers. It has been a great success!” said Kelley Johnson, apprenticeship and training representative, U.S. DOL, Office of Apprenticeship.


TCC currently has apprentice programs in building technologies/construction to include heavy equipment operator; commercial carpenter; building automation systems technician; information technology to include digital marketer; and, automotive technology to include diesel technician.

For more information about TCC’s current apprenticeships or for businesses looking to start their own, please contact the TCC Registered Apprentice Program at apprenticeships@tccd.edu or 817-515-4320.



A job may seem standard to an outsider, but the best result calls for special attention and problem-solving to meet the business' needs. Apprenticeships are the best way for an employer to get someone who does exactly what they need.

Wahiba Belakoua
TCC Coordinator of Apprenticeships



A Passion to Teach

INSPIRED BY TEACHERS WHO
MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR
LIVES, STUDENTS SEEK TO DO THE
SAME FOR OTHERS THROUGH
TCC'S TEACHER
EDUCATION PROGRAM

By Bill Lace

To learn more about TCC's Teacher Education program, visit: <https://www.tccd.edu/academics/courses-and-programs/programs-a-z/credit/teacher-education/>

It took more than a decade of determined effort before Carla Schriver could finally “close a chapter in my life” and, with timely advice from two TCC faculty members, open a new one as a teacher in the Fort Worth ISD. Schriver is one of a growing number of students to use TCC as a springboard to a teaching career.

A high school dropout, Schriver was 30 when she earned her GED (General Educational Development) and began classes at TCC Northwest. She wanted a degree, “something that would set an example for my kids,” but didn’t know in what discipline. She thought about nursing, but her first anatomy and physiology class convinced her otherwise.

Fortunately, she was taking the Student Transition to College Success class under Brent Alford. “One day we were talking about careers, and he said, ‘You may not know what you want to do, but I want you to think of something you actually enjoy and would do for free,’” she said. “I used to teach kids at Sunday School, so I thought that wouldn’t be so bad.”

She enrolled in the teacher education program at TCC Northeast, but her plan was to pursue the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree and be “finished” with a two-year degree. That, however, was before she took a class under Rosa Mendez, who told her about the two-plus-one agreement with Texas Tech University.

Under this partnership, students can attend TCC for two years and then be enrolled online at Texas Tech online for one year to earn a bachelor’s degree in bilingual education, all while not having to leave home to do their practice teaching.

“I think that if I’d never taken that class with Dr. Mendez, I probably wouldn’t have found out about Texas Tech and wouldn’t have become a teacher,” Schriver said. Texas Tech even allowed her to do her practice teaching at Hubbard Heights Elementary, where she was already working as a teacher’s assistant.

It was for students like Schriver that TCC’s Teacher Education Program was launched in 2004. There were already education programs aplenty at area universities, but not one with the same degree of affordability and proximity. “A lot of our students have children,” Mendez said, “and so they have to be flexible enough to pick up their children in a timely manner rather than driving from Arlington or Denton.

The program began on what was almost an experimental basis with only 30 students. Mendez, herself a TCC alumna, was the sole faculty member, and she had been hired only on a full-time temporary basis. It was located on TCC Northwest, but grew so rapidly that an expansion to TCC South in 2009 was necessary. By 2021, enrollment was 350.

Several factors fueled the increase, said Shereah Taylor, program coordinator at TCC South. “We got a boom in 2012-2013 from students who were returning to the workforce,” she said. “They had been stay-at-home parents and were looking for something that would afford them the flexibility to follow their child’s schedule.”

Veterans were a big part of the new student pool, as were

people looking for a career change during the Great Recession. “I remember my second or third year having seven male students, which was unheard of,” Taylor said.

The agreement with Texas Tech sparked an uptick. “Faster is always better,” Taylor said. “People called us and were saying, ‘You mean I can do two years and TCC and then one year at Texas Tech and I’m done?’ People see TCC and our AAT program as really a launching point.”

But Texas Tech is only one of several partners to which students transfer. TCC has agreements with 11 universities as near as TCU and UTA and as distant as Stephen F. Austin and Texas A&M-Commerce. “It’s become a very smooth transition, especially over the last three or four years,” Mendez said. “That wasn’t always so, but Shereah and I have been working very closely in reaching out to the education deans at the universities, sitting down with them.”

Perhaps the most eloquent advocates for university acceptance of TCC’s Teacher Education Program have been the students themselves. “I think that word of mouth has gotten around to the universities as to how our students will excel once they get to them,” Taylor said. “Our students are ready. They’re prepared for the challenge.”

The student population is diverse. Some are just out of high school. Indeed, some are still students at one of TCC’s early college high schools. Others are older, perhaps parents whose last child is now in kindergarten or others working as teacher aides who look around them and think, “I can do this.” They are overwhelmingly still female.

Awaiting them are three AAT options depending on whether the student wants to teach through sixth grade, through 12th grade or through 12th grade in special education. Each degree requires a subject matter specialization, and choices range from math to music.

Though popular wisdom holds that teachers are in it for the outcomes, not the income, many students are attracted by the salary levels. Taylor points to one such student who entered the program as a dual credit student who came to TCC with 30 semester hours, finished her degree in a year and did the one-year Texas Tech program; at age 19, she began as a bilingual elementary school teacher with a salary around \$60,000. “Not only was she the first in her family to attend college,” Taylor said, “but she had the opportunity to totally change the economic trajectory of her household. She told me, ‘My dad didn’t have to work three or four jobs, and my mom didn’t have to clean as many houses.’”

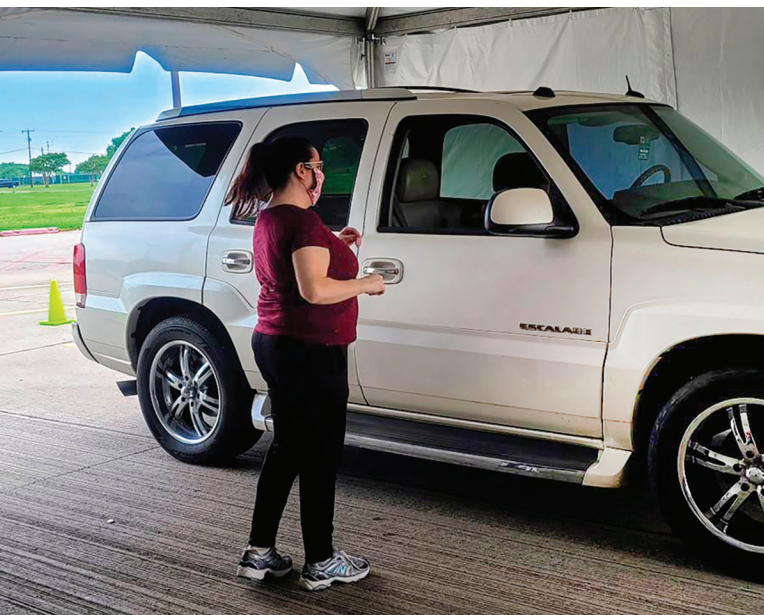
And yet, diverse as they are, TCC’s Teacher Education students share a common desire. “They have a passion to teach others,” Mendez said. “They have a passion to make a difference in the community. There was that one teacher along the way who made a significant impact on them.

For Carla Schriver, that teacher was Mendez. “She’s the reason I became a teacher,” she said. “I just instantly clicked with her because she’s wonderful. I’m very big on encouraging my fifth-graders on higher education. I’m glad to do anything that might help somebody who’s like me when I was there.”

IT'S AUTOMAGICAL!

TCC'S INVISIBLE BACKBONE MAINTAINS OPERATIONS WHILE BUILDING BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE

By Brian Melton



Normally, Spring Break means fun in the sun, a quick trip to an exotic beach and a bit of a breather before the final sprint to summer.

But spring break 2020 was anything but normal. Dawning under a cloud of fear sparked by growing concerns about COVID-19, people across the country pondered the wisdom of going to the grocery store, much less an idyllic resort getaway.

Schools across the country pondered, too. For Tarrant County College, the decision came swiftly—the Chancellor's office declared that all classes would move online as of March 16, 2020.

ENSURING OPERATIONAL AND ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

“This effectively became our moon shot,” said Bob Pacheco, TCC’s chief technology officer. “Immediately, we had several large priorities. One was to gather a large number of electronic devices and distribute to faculty, staff and students so they could continue their work. Another was to make sure the school’s electronic backbone could handle the oncoming tsunami of demand for storage, bandwidth and utilization. Yet another priority was making sure our

instructors could transition their course materials—designed for classrooms, by the way—to a robust online environment.”

In other words, all gloved hands—and masked faces, too—were on deck for the foreseeable future.

Fortunately, several key factors played into their favor. The first was Pacheco’s prior experience—in the Navy, as a technology business owner and as a senior consultant who had led high-profile, complex projects at two notable management consulting firms. His background attuned him to effectively (and rapidly) break down problems and execute intricate plans with highly capable teams.

Another key factor—Doug Williamson and the Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO). “They provided the glue that sandwiched all the various pieces together,” said Pacheco. “Without their coordination, it would’ve been near-impossible to make this transition.”

According to Williamson, “Metaphorically, we were building a bridge while we were on it, so we needed an agile approach. From a command-and-control perspective, who needs what and by when, and who else needs to be involved? We asked those questions in brief daily meetings, along with what the team did yesterday, and what needs to be done today

and tomorrow? It was pretty intense, but it worked extremely well, especially since we had a strong IT base to start with.”

“The TCC Connect team, led by Carlos Morales, also was instrumental,” adds Pacheco. “They helped train faculty members who weren’t used to teaching virtually. Masterful work.”

So, all the pieces were in place, more or less. All they needed was time.

As it turned out, time was an asset they could manipulate—to a degree.

ALL-IN—THREE PHASES

The first phase meant authorizing all employees to take home their work computers and monitors. “We gathered laptops from around the District and distributed them to faculty and staff from the Trinity River parking garage,” said Pacheco. “We leaned on our Microsoft Partners to acquire a thousand Surface Pros, and the company even went to the extreme of raiding their stores to get us devices.”

Campus Support Services teams coordinated the distribution



A LOOK BACK

Actions were already underway to migrate classroom instruction to a digital environment. In fact, just a few days earlier, the school approved the Districtwide adoption of Microsoft Teams as their productivity platform of choice, a move that Pacheco said made their tasks eminently more manageable.

“Microsoft was an outstanding partner,” he said. “They were out here daily, helping make sure we had the bandwidth and cloud storage and everything else required to pull it off.”

The situation was certainly helped by starting from a position of strength. TCC owns a world-class, 30,000-square-foot data center that hosts 100 physical servers and more than 400 virtual servers—with the capacity for much, much more.

“So, on our end, all we needed to do was drastically condense our existing methodical, phased five-year plan of scrupulous testing and careful implementation into just three months,” he added with a chuckle.

And it worked.

Their secret: establishing and maintaining continuity in three phases—device acquisition and distribution, business continuation and academic transition.

effort with IT, the Police department, Emergency Operations Command and Real Estate and Facilities. They also developed a streamlined and safe distribution protocol that kept people in their cars with zero contact. “And they did this despite their understandable concern about COVID,” added Pacheco. “We couldn’t have done this without their assistance. They’re very much the unsung heroes of this entire effort.”

In the second phase, the team addressed potential student “digital-divide” issues. “We decided up front that no TCC student should worry about lacking a computer, then or now,” he said. TCC worked with T-Mobile to purchase 2,000 tablets and keyboards with unlimited LTE cellular data packages, while the IT staff coordinated with Taylor Rentals to set up drive-thru tents on every campus (except for Trinity River and its covered parking).

Facilities staff provided electricity and fans to blow away exhaust fumes as cars passed through. Library staffers handled distribution of devices to students, while Campus Support Services handled logistics and the Police department provided safety and security during pick-up times.

In the third and final phase, student device distribution transitioned to designated campus locations at or near libraries. IT also commissioned videos showing how to use tablets and

the TCC Virtual Desktop Interface so students could easily understand how to accomplish their tasks.

“COVID-19 changed our whole way of thinking about how we deliver content and serve ongoing business needs,” said Richard Sullivan, TCC’s associate vice chancellor, IT infrastructure. “Virtually overnight, we faced the challenge of getting devices into the hands of nearly 50,000 students and our staff and faculty too, and then getting them online quickly.”

ON THE FRONT LINES

While Sullivan rode herd on device and equipment distribution and continuity, Vicki Hutto, executive director of IT systems, led the business continuity efforts, making sure that

it. And we managed to do that, too!”

According to Pacheco, “The team worked 14 hours a day, seven days a week, for the better part of six weeks.” “But everyone stopped on a dime and switched gears smoothly. We’d find problems, solve them, then move on to the next situation. There wasn’t time to worry, so we didn’t.”

Sullivan, Hamilton and Hutto agree.

“Everybody stepped up,” said Sullivan. “This was a true team effort and it took the efforts of everyone from every department. Without that, we couldn’t have pulled it off.”

“I never lost sleep,” Hamilton added. “This is a close team anyway, and through this experience, we stood even closer, shoulder to shoulder. The attitude was very much, ‘I trust you,



bills and staff were paid, and the transactional data was secure.

“Signals were already coming that the business offices would be moving online,” she said. “We were already in that mode with plans in place to fill the needs. We figured a week, but we really only had 48 hours! We met every day, sometimes more often, and everybody knew where their roles intersected, so it was a remarkably smooth process.”

“We knew we had the infrastructure in place to maintain the platform’s integrity and security,” added Caroline Hamilton, director of academic technology and the Center for Teaching and Learning. Her team’s job: to ensure the integrity of the academic experience.

“We made sure that training for Blackboard, our online Learning Management System (LMS), was up and ready to go,” she said. “Instructors needed to know how to transition curriculum and course materials from their classrooms to an online environment. And while we found a few proctoring system incompatibilities, those were ironed out quickly by onboarding a bit of new tech. Really, the larger issue was creating awareness of what we already had and how best to use

and I appreciate that you trust me.’ I feel very blessed to be on this team.”

Said Hutto, “I’ve heard that the experience IT delivered has been referred to in one word. Automagical!”

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RANCH

When the word went out in March that classes and business activities were moving online, all five campuses went into semi-hibernation mode.

“Classes and business operations can be moved online quite successfully, as we’ve seen,” said Okang Hemmings, TCC’s executive director of real estate and facilities. “But plumbers can’t do their job via Microsoft Teams. So we stayed onsite to handle preventive maintenance items. Think of it like a good military defense—we’re keeping our tools sharp and ready for the time when everybody comes back.”

Hemmings noted that his group’s responsibilities encompass the land, road networks, utilities both under and aboveground and, of course, the buildings.

“Take any one of our buildings and turn it upside down,” he

said. “Everything that doesn’t fall out, other than IT equipment, is our responsibility. And all of it, including the structure itself, responds to external environmental stimuli. That’s why we couldn’t shut down electricity or water or equipment like HVACs because you’ll have mold buildup and electronics could go bad, among a host of other issues. Generators and boilers are designed to be used to help their longevity; they can’t just sit. If you don’t use it, you lose it.”

Hemmings also said there’s no manual for shutting down a campus while keeping it viable. “It’s uncharted territory and still a learning process for us in terms of improving our responsiveness.”

He said his teams are using the lull in occupancy to complete several major projects, including a remodel of the Science

communication tools.

“Canvas was selected for two big reasons,” said Project Lead Hamilton. “One was that it most closely aligned with the functional requirements identified by our staff and faculty. This wasn’t an IT initiative; it was an everybody initiative. And two, Canvas is a clean, user-friendly, content-focused platform that’s excellent for supporting an integrative learning environment.”

She added that the more she’s exposed to the Canvas platform, the more inspired she becomes. “This is a true game changer for the way we deliver instruction,” she said, adding, “I’m really optimistic about our future.”

Williamson and the EPMO team are optimistic about the future, too. “The College will use the valuable lessons learned



Learning Center as well as road and sidewalk modifications at TCC Northeast; redevelopment at TCC Northwest; demolition of the TCC South SRTA building and construction of the welding lab; initial redevelopment at TCC Northwest; third-floor renovation at TCC Trinity River; consolidation of Campus Support Services into one main location at each campus; and, extensive HVAC system upgrades throughout the District to protect against COVID with higher-filtration devices, UV light and bipolar ionization, to name just a few.

LOOKING AHEAD

Along with the facility updates, remodels and renovations going on across all the campuses, the IT team continues to work on security updates and protection (a seemingly never-ending process these days).

And in big news, the Canvas Implementation Project Team is migrating the Learning Management System (LMS) from the current Blackboard platform to Canvas, which includes a variety of customizable course creation and management tools, course and user analytics and statistics and internal

about how to operate in a virtual capacity, which is critical to being truly engaged in the 21st century,” he said. “With cloud-based, best-in-class software, the sky is literally the limit to what we can do going forward. Which is good because there’s no turning back now!”



COVID-19 changed our whole way of thinking about how we deliver content and serve ongoing business needs. Virtually overnight, we faced the challenge of getting devices into the hands of nearly 50,000 students and our staff and faculty too, and then getting them online quickly.

Richard Sullivan
TCC’s Associate Vice Chancellor, IT Infrastructure



Mining Your Digital Diamonds

HOW TO LIVE A SIMPLER, SAFER DIGITAL LIFE

By Gina Brasseur

Recent analysis of more than 20,000 computer users worldwide discovered that people have an average of 90 online accounts. Americans have upwards of 130 online accounts including everything from social media, shopping and banking, to streaming services, fast food rewards and drugstore loyalty programs. And medical appointments. And DIY forums. And dating sites. And electronics warranties. And prescription refills. And movie rentals. And paint colors libraries. And ...

While all these accounts may have served a purpose at one time, this digital clutter is now a burden for many who feel buried in digital rubble. But with some time and focused effort, people can mine their “digital diamonds” to live a simpler, safer digital life.

DIGITAL RUBBLE

In the early 2000s, a short-lived television reality show featured people living together in an empty house. They were only given a credit card, a computer and an internet connection. The goal of the show was for the participants to survive by only shopping online. As the show progressed, they struggled to find food, clothing and furniture to order and have delivered.

Fast forward 20 years and almost the opposite is true. It would be a daily struggle for the average person to live without

the internet and smart technology. But with each convenient service a person wants to use, an account must be created with an email address, username and password. Multiply this by 50, 60 or even 70 accounts and it is almost impossible to keep track of it all.

“Everybody has their one favorite password,” says Bob Pacheco, chief technology officer for Tarrant County College. “There may be variations on it, but everybody does it. And, that’s terrible, because it doesn’t take that long for a hacker to discover it”.

Once a hacker uncovers the passwords, they can access untold amounts of information about account owners through direct access to the accounts or through phishing. Phishing is when cyber criminals attempt to access confidential data through nefarious emails, texts, social media contact or messaging apps. An example of this could be an email asking the user to submit their bank account number because there might have been suspicious activity. Once the hacker receives the bank number, they pair it up with the password to access the account and steal the account holder’s money. According to identity theft protection company Life-Lock.com, a person is hacked every three seconds on average. “There are tools out there that allows you to preview all your accounts that you’ve saved and see which ones have actually had breaches, and you should change your password,” said Pacheco.

SOURCE OF STRESS

Having dozens of online accounts can not only be a risk for identity theft, but it can also have a negative impact on the mental health of the user.

“There are some downfalls to technology when an individual or organization uses it improperly,” says Divya Patel, counselor at TCC Southeast. “Overstimulation by constant exposure without breaks is harmful. It creates mental health concerns. Too many online accounts may cause stress, anxiety and other problems when it is not managed properly.

“Limiting our digital life will help us balance our life, improve well-being and appreciate the here and now. It will allow space for more meaningful interactions with our loved ones, time with nature and any other activities which we might want to practice mindfully.”

THINK BEFORE YOU LINK

Professional organizing consultant Marie Kondo gained worldwide popularity when she taught people to tidy up their homes and keep only the things that “spark joy.” That concept applies not only to closets, kitchens and garages, but to online life, too.

Before clicking a link to sign up for a new account or an email newsletter, pause and ask a few questions. “Do I really need this? How often am I going to use it? Can I access the information or benefits another way? What are the risks of giving out my personal information when I sign up?”

“You would be amazed at the amount of personal information being collected when you are signing up for online accounts,” stated Kevin Moore, instructor of computer sciences for TCC Connect. “That information is being sold to the highest bidder. I would call it data harvesting. It gathers your web history, banking information, tracks what products you buy, how much time you spend online, your contacts outside of the app, as well as your political views. The list goes on.”

Once someone’s consumer profile is created, they can be monitored online and targeted with customized ads, junk email and spam phone calls, according to Moore.

Organizations are required by law to have Privacy Policies that outline how they are going to use Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and keep it safe once a user opens an account. However, human error can still play a role in one’s information being vulnerable. In 2017, a mistake by a single employee at a credit monitoring company allowed hackers to gain access to the sensitive financial data of nearly 146,000,000 Americans. How? The person simply failed to apply security patches to an already-known vulnerability on a server.

Likewise, almost all apps downloaded and installed on smart phones or tablets track varying amounts of data on the device. They often request access to the user’s phone records, microphone, camera, physical location, shopping habits, photos, videos and text messages. All this data is also sold.

“The biggest issue for the information being collected and sold to third parties, most of the time without your knowledge, is the more times the data is shared, the greater the opportunity it ends up in the wrong hands,” says Moore.

DIGITAL DECLUTTERING

According to *WIRED* magazine, the first step in cleaning up one’s digital footprint is to make a list of all online accounts. Look through old emails or bank account statements to help jog the memory. Users also can look in the settings of social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube to find long forgotten accounts that are linked to them. If possible, make note of the username, email and/or password tied to each account.

Once this list is complete, determine which accounts to keep and which ones to delete. What is the value of that frequent-flyer program account when all the miles have expired? How important is that blogging account if nothing has been posted in the last few years?

One by one, sign into the accounts selected for deletion. Do a quick search of their website to find the information on how to delete the account. Given the option to deactivate or delete, always choose to delete. Deactivating an account will lock the user out of it, but the information may remain accessible to the company. If the account cannot be deleted, edit the information therein including changing the user name to something like ABC DEF and the address to 123 Main Street.

Next, users should survey all the apps on their smart phone or tablet. Again, make note of apps that are important and those that have languished, unused. According to the online privacy company JoinDelete.me, hackers take advantage of unpatched, vulnerable code to gain access private data on phones. Delete all unused and unimportant apps, especially the apps that are so old, they no longer receive updates.

For all other apps, make sure to update them regularly. Read through the Terms and Conditions to fully understand what services the app is accessing on mobile devices. If something looks suspicious, investigate it further by contacting the app developer.

The results of digital housekeeping can help reduce one’s risk of identity theft or being the target of spammers. No action is going to provide 100 percent protection from cyber criminals, but by reducing digital rubble, one can tighten up security and live a safer, simpler digital life. “With proper usage, people can understand the ways to use technology to their benefit by being productive and intentional. Digital mindfulness helps people understand how to declutter unnecessary or harmful habits while using technology,” says Patel.

For more information about digital mindfulness and how to live a more balanced digital life, contact the Advising and Counseling Center at TCC Southeast at **817-515-3590** or <https://www.tccd.edu/services/support-services/counseling/counseling-contact/>.

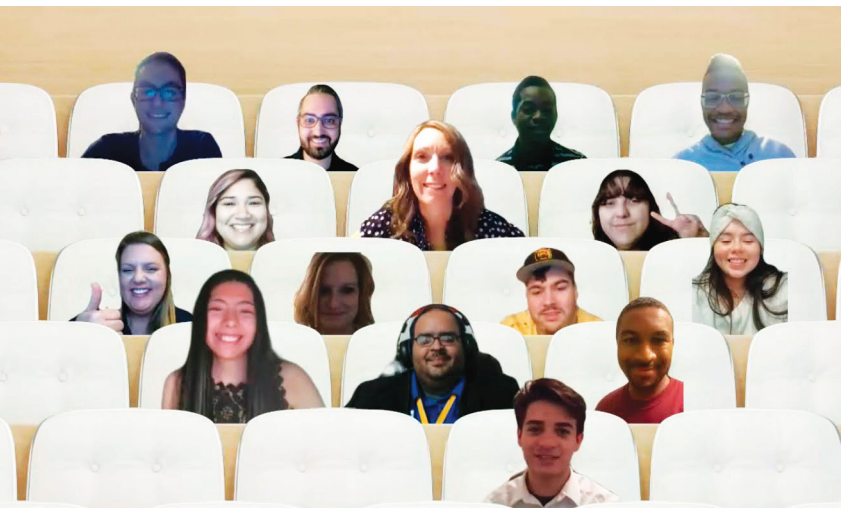


Rule #1 of cybersecurity?

If you don't want it hacked, write it on paper.

Robert Heyser

Director of Web Communications, TCC



THE NEW VIRTUAL REALITY

TCC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES TEAMS FIND NEW WAYS TO REACH STUDENTS IN A REMOTE ENVIRONMENT

By Rita L.B. Parson



We look at events as opportunities for us to learn. In this virtual environment, we have been doing a lot of learning. This environment has also challenged our creativity. We are constantly having new ideas about how to keep our programming fresh for our students. Thinking way outside our usual box has helped us to create more engaging content for our students.

Rachael McCloskey
Coordinator of Student
Activities, TCC Northwest

“Student affairs professionals have always been concerned with the development of the ‘whole student’...The activities of student affairs have changed over time, (but) the basic tenets of helping students reach their full potential and attending to them as human beings—not simply those in need of intellectual training—has remained constant.”

— Maureen E. Wilson, U. Monique Robinson-Wright and Sonya G. Smith, Education Encyclopedia-State University.com

Creative agility enabled Tarrant County College’s Student Development Services (SDS) teams, known for enhancing hands-on student experiences beyond the classroom, to remain viable for students although they lost the ability to reach out and touch them.

Those working closely with students, whether in student activities, student engagement, student life or specific student programs and services, are accustomed to continuously “rubbing elbows” with students as they plan and deliver critical services to support the student experience. That intimate environment was abruptly challenged when COVID-19 safety protocols dictated that face-to-face interactions come to a halt.

“We had to become flexible in how we help students feel connected and engaged. We had to learn fast,” said Michael DuPont, SDS vice president at TCC Southeast. “We had to learn the new virtual format and systems. We (also) had to learn our students needs with regard to moving to a virtual campus format (since) not all students had immediate virtual access.”

SDS teams throughout the College quickly rose to the occasion.

“One of the first things we did was create a Blackboard page for our offices. This became a good way to engage with our students and keep them updated on our events/programs,” said Ana L. Contreras, coordinator of student activities for TCC South. “We continued our

programming, but all online. We had to be creative in how we facilitated our events.”

At TCC Trinity River, the evolution to serve its students in the new environment also included Blackboard. They created a homepage that included images, links, resources and videos to connect with students, said Julie Amon, SDS vice president for TCC Trinity River.

“TR Career Services was pretty innovative with our Bitmoji Classroom...a different way to remind students of our services. We had 72 visitors. We plan to keep the classroom available and updated after we return to campus,” Amon said. “Virtual events provide us the ability to work as One College publicizing one event to all students across the District such as transfer fairs and information sessions, health fairs and veterans’ week,” she said.

Making the transition to Blackboard and other platforms had its twists and turns. “Adjusting to the virtual platform required trial and error,” said Yolanda Sifuentes, coordinator of special projects for the Family Empowerment Center at TCC South. “It was challenging to fix errors virtually.”

It also was daunting to garner participation in various student-centered events when traditional ways to reach them were no longer feasible.

“The most challenging aspect of the transition (was) not being able to see the students and for them not to see us. They can’t pass by our event and decide to walk in the room. They can’t hear the live music, smell the food, nor see the crowds,” said Rachael McCloskey, coordinator of student activities at TCC Northwest. “Often, so many of our students would come into an event because they walked by and wanted to check it out. In the digital world, it’s tough to re-create that type of marketing. We can’t put out flyers and posters all over their computer screens and we can’t pump in smells and sounds of events into student homes.”

TCC Northeast Peer Leader Megan Bordow agreed. “The lack of face-to-face—being able to have that bond makes it more comfortable and relaxed when explaining things and helping students—you just don’t get over the internet.”

Because she and her peers were able to joke about technical difficulties, they could help and support each other through the struggles ranging from technical difficulties to life’s problems.

The online environment also was expanded to

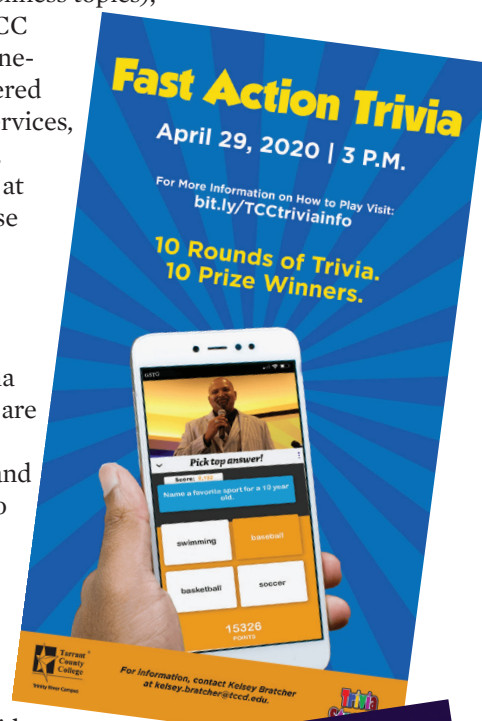
include providing for the health needs of the TCC community. “Students can self-schedule online for an appointment with a nurse. We provide a spectrum of services that includes education (answers to questions, health education and wellness topics), referrals to the community or to TCC resources. Nurse consultations, a one-on-one appointment with a Registered Nurse employed by TCC Health Services, (are available),” said Crystal Martz, coordinator of health care services at TCC Northeast. “We also offer those same services to faculty and staff.”

Several health programs were designed after evaluating what programming would be impactful through a digital platform, said Tina C. Ingram, coordinator of Health Care Services at TCC South. Programs have included Suicide Prevention and Education event in October, a video series on Breast Cancer Awareness and the first TCC Virtual Health Fair with 20 community partners presenting about 10 health and 11 wellness topics, Ingram said.

Health Care Services staff also began to update their skills to provide better service. “All Health Services coordinators and 80 percent of the full-time nurses across the District began Health Coach Certification Training with an estimated completion date of April 2021,” Ingram said.

Although challenges emerged, resilient staff members throughout the College were able to continue some pre-pandemic programs, such as the successful TOROTalks: Healing Through Conversation and the Arts platform launched at TCC South in February 2020.

“(It is) an intentional and consistent platform that provides a safe space where students, faculty, staff and the community can discuss the impact that the narratives and conditions created by systems of inequity,” said Stephanie Hill, former SDS vice president at TCC South. “TOROTalks provides



an opportunity to acknowledge resulting barriers and divides that must be engaged, discussed and healed through understanding, reflection and renewal, while affirming the inherent value of all people.”

Students helped to plan and implement the program, often serving as panelists, Hill said. Since TOROTalks also can serve as a responsive platform, a two-part series was sponsored in summer 2020 on “The Urgency of Now: Privilege, Oppression and Black Lives in America!”

The Trio Program at TCC South also was able to remain in touch with its community of students by continuing to use its pre-pandemic resource, REMIND. “This tool allows our staff to communicate with our students and parents as well as send out announcements,” said Mandy Hernandez, Trio coordinator at TCC South. “As we prepare for our return to in-person sessions, our program will continue to use these tools. (In addition), it is our goal to incorporate all that we have learned in the virtual setting into an in-person program.”

Created to welcome students to the physical campus, navigators were established at TCC Northwest to help students achieve success by connecting them to the classes and services they sought. “We thought the most welcoming way to greet our students was with smiling faces, rather than static signage,” McCloskey said. “We also offered free snacks and water to students. We know sometimes students may be rushed and forget to eat breakfast or need a boost later in the day. Offering simple snacks is another way to make them feel at home and ready for success!”

The SDS goal of making students feel welcome remains the same, but in this digital age it is achieved by engaging students in other ways.

“We have increased our video-making skills, added live chat sessions and created more virtual ways students can interact with us and with each other,” McCloskey said. “We put several hours into making our myTCC page more helpful and fun for our students. Prior to COVID, our Blackboard/myTCC page was not used as frequently. We (now have) found ways (for it) to help our students (remain) connected to our campus.”

Several staff said one benefit of the digital realm is that it has allowed them to create an “on-demand” video library consisting of training, events and other programming for viewing at the student’s convenience.

“We have embraced our ability to record workshops and provide orientation in an asynchronous format. Our students’ schedules are more hectic than ever with the pandemic being in full swing, so it has been important to provide our

resources in a format that they can utilize no matter what their work, home and school schedule looks like,” said Matthew Taylor, SDS director for TCC Connect.

McCloskey spoke of the professional benefits of acquiring the new skills to maneuver in the virtual world.

“We look at events as opportunities for us to learn. In this virtual environment, we have been doing a lot of learning. This environment has also challenged our creativity,” she said. “We are constantly having new ideas about how to keep our programming fresh for our students. Thinking way outside our usual box has helped us to create more engaging content for our students. We also have revealed hidden talents for video making, social media and problem-solving.”

The ability to provide quality programs and services

quickly in the new shelter-in-place environment was and continues to be feasible because of the staff’s attitude. Sifuentes said the emergence in the digital word required their team to adopt the new 3 R’s—Readjust, Replace and Recover. “Readjust your mind and your delivery to fit the student needs. Replace what doesn’t work with what works best. Recover from what you have lost and work on building something new,” she said.

Meeting the needs of students is not the only concern of SDS teams. They also wanted to do the same for each other, according to Cara Walker, student activities coordinator at TCC Northeast. “The main challenge has been to facilitate the same kind of camaraderie that we had face-to-face,” Walker said.

While it stretched them to quickly make the changes necessary to implement new tools and continue serving their students, several SDS teams plan to continue taking advantage of the benefits of their newfound resources.

“Video conferencing (via Teams) helps us squeeze more into our day. Previously, it would be normal to schedule physical meetings at campuses around the District,” said Pete Fiannaca, SDS director at TCC Northeast. “Travel time would essentially be wasted time. With remote meetings becoming the norm, travel time may become a thing of the past.”

Several teams have indicated that they also will continue to use online platforms to keep students abreast of happenings after campuses reopen.

“SDS has embraced this virtual work environment. We know that moving forward a portion of our virtual programming will continue for all students,” Amon said.



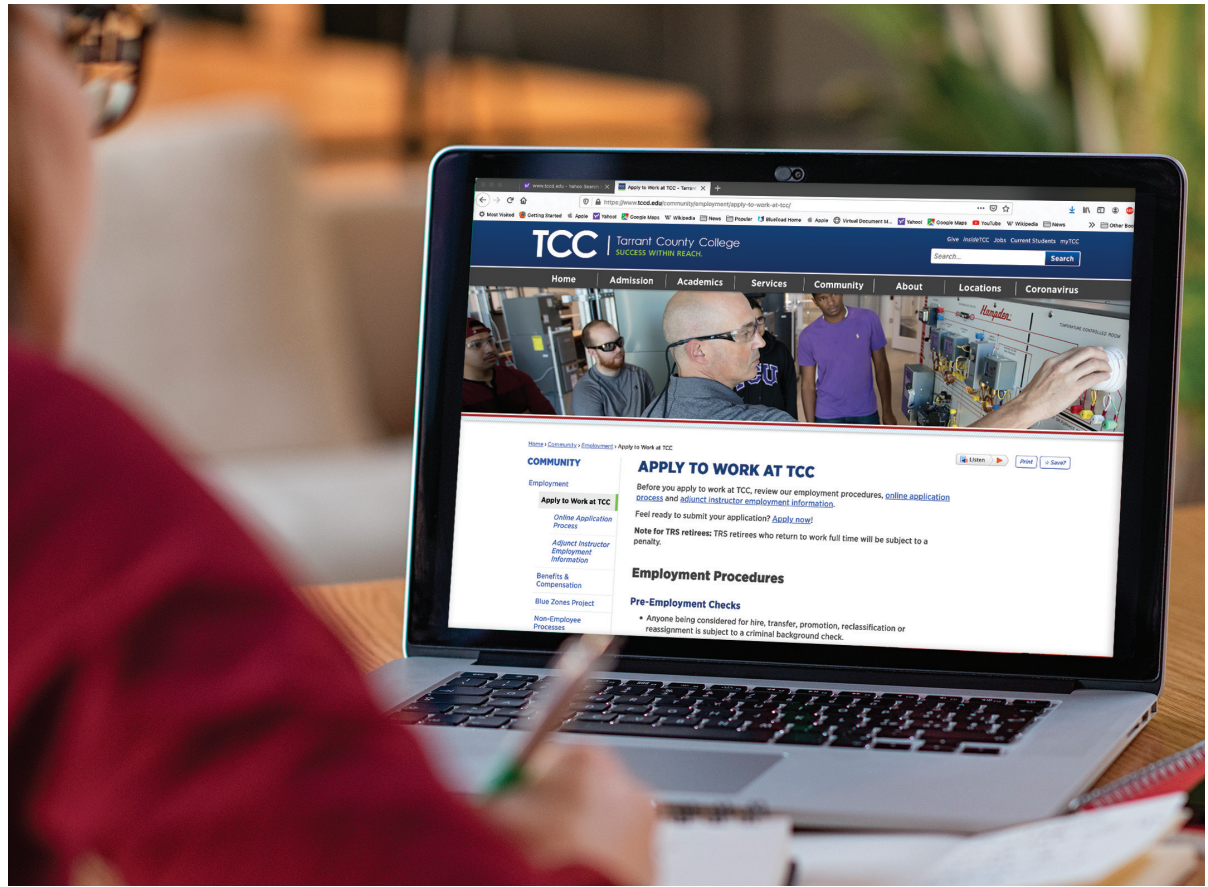
To connect with College life, check out student activities at: <https://www.tccd.edu/services/student-life/student-activities/>

HIRE

ELEVATING THE IMPACT OF ON-CAMPUS STUDY WORK OPPORTUNITIES

By Reginald Lewis

**JOBS WITH THE
COLLEGE CAN
BE A FINANCIAL
LIFELINE FOR
SOME STUDENTS,
HELPING REMOVE
AN OBSTACLE TO
THEIR ACADEMIC
SUCCESS.**



Managing tuition, family obligations and building a résumé are just some of the reasons many TCC students seek on-campus employment. Jobs with the College can be a financial lifeline for some students, helping remove an obstacle to their academic success.

In the past, however, some students found the application process for TCC jobs to be challenging. Hiring students was a paper-based, manual process that required students to travel to each campus where they wanted to apply. Unfortunately, there were inconsistent hiring practices used across the District, resulting in an uneven student experience. While the overall application process did a good job of exposing TCC students to the realities of obtaining employment, some inefficiencies proved onerous to both students and supervisors.

Something had to change.

Building a strong application process is a critical element of the student employment experience, according to the National Association of Student Affairs Administrators website. That's why TCC used a more student-centered approach to redesign its application process more than a year ago, continuing its commitment to being a student-ready college.

As a result, TCC established the Career Services Student Employment Work Team to redesign TCC's student employment program. This group, one of many working to advance the College's 3G8P (three goals and eight principles) vision, included professional input from the areas of Business Services, Career Services, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance and the Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO).

Leading the team through this collaborative work was William (Bill) McMullen, director of student financial aid services for TCC Trinity River. He credits the team's broad representation and wealth of experience for allowing the group to navigate such a challenging project.

"This comprehensive approach enabled us to scrutinize every aspect of a mammoth procedure that spanned numerous campus and District offices. We first identified all aspects of the complex system, which allowed us to design the streamlined process," McMullen said. "The team took an appreciative inquiry approach to the work as we sought to ensure the program design is from a student-first perspective."

During a three-month period in late 2020, students, supervisors and personnel in Career Services

and Financial Aid tested the viability of the new process. Reducing the average length of the hiring process was a key improvement. With the new automated process, it took an average of 20 days for students to apply and get hired, compared to the 45- to 60-day window some students experienced.

“This new process is much more efficient and makes it easier for our students to take advantage of one of the greatest benefits available to them while studying at TCC: work, which we will attempt to align with their chosen career path and provide work experiences to be added to their professional résumé,” said TCC Trinity River President Sean Madison, the College’s champion for the Career Services Student Employment Work Team.

“I found TCC’s job site easy to navigate and apply for jobs,” said Jennifer Nunley, a mental health and human services major currently working for the Communications, Public Relations & Marketing department.

“I am glad that you’re able to create a profile and just keep it updated as you go. The process is very smooth.”

Other program enhancements include the standardization of student positions and pay for four employment levels, with hourly rates ranging from \$8.79 to \$12. Interestingly, there was no consistency across the College with respect to job titles for students. Prior to the redesign, students were called student workers, work-study students or student workers. Today, all TCC students are known as “student employees,” a move that was welcomed by students and supervisors alike.

“The emphasis on calling them ‘student employees’ is fantastic,” said Marjeanna Burge, coordinator of the Intercultural Network at TCC Northeast. “Of course, I’m still catching myself using the phrase ‘student worker’ occasionally, but I am grateful this change was made and emphasized... words matter.”

Under this new system, TCC aims to hire roughly 420 students across the District each year, according to

Jesica Valadez Espinoza, administrative assistant of career services at TCC Trinity River. The pandemic has slowed hiring somewhat; however, those numbers are expected to improve once students return to campus.

Federal and state funding covers 75 percent of the student’s wages at TCC, with the remaining 25 percent being covered by the institution. Last year, TCC spent approximately \$660,000 to cover students’ wages. This year TCC has allocated roughly \$789,000 institutional dollars to support student employees. When some schools had to eliminate work-study jobs last year due to the pandemic, TCC was able to retain students and pay their wages.

Stephanie Franco, assistant director of financial aid, tracks annual federal, state and institutional funds to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines. Students no longer have to worry about losing a position due to lack of funding—an occurrence that happened far too often.

Hourly students are limited to no more than 19.5 hours per week during any academic period at TCC. Students working 20 hours or less on campus report higher levels of engagement and are less likely to drop out, according to several studies.

Student employees play a critical role in TCC’s operations. In fact, they ensure that essential College facilities such as campus libraries and TCC bookstores, among other areas, are running smoothly. They can be found working in many departments or facilities throughout the District.

“Our student employee [Jesus Ramirez] spends time in the library every week working a curbside shift (answering the phone, distributing library materials to students, etc.) shelving materials, organizing and much more,” said Brittany Wedgeworth Parker, library manager at TCC Northwest. “He also works virtually from home, helping us test student devices, creating library flyers and using LinkedIn Learning for his professional development.” The online courses allow

him to improve his communication and time management skills.

Ramirez, whose goal is to become a biomedical engineer, is thankful for the opportunity to grow professionally. “This job is giving me a more office type of experience,” he said. “All my previous experience had been in retail or restaurants, so this will really expand my résumé and experience.”

While working, students are mentored and coached by their supervisors in order to learn new skills and adapt in a professional work environment. Supervisors also receive formalized mentor training to help enhance the student work experience.

“The new Student Employment Program is designed to help students explore different career pathways while adding relevant work experience to their résumés,” said Angela Pena, coordinator of career & employment services. “With this new program, we are helping our students become leaders and professionals in our community.”

TCC leaders expect this new program to help students make an even greater impact in the community. A well-educated workforce is key to a more prosperous Tarrant County and hopefully, boosting the economic well-being of its people. By increasing the number of degreed and credentialed workers, the region can be seen as an attractive option for high-wage employers looking to relocate to the area.

“All departments are encouraged to think outside the box and find ways to employ students during this pandemic. Don’t wait until we return to campus,” said David Wallace, project manager for TCC’s Enterprise Project Management Office. “By doing so, departments can help students meet their financial needs while also providing work experience and helping them build marketable skills.”

To learn more about job opportunities at Tarrant County College, visit jobs.tccd.edu.

Leading by Example, One Step at a Time

SINGLE MOTHER ENROLLS AT TCC TO BE A BETTER PROVIDER
AND A ROLE MODEL FOR HER DAUGHTERS

By Kendra Prince



Photos courtesy of Roadtrip Nation

Single mothers often face significant challenges, including financial insecurity and caregiving issues, when it comes to completing postsecondary degrees. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research report, "Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education: Costs and Benefits to Individuals, Families, and Society," only eight percent of single mothers who are enrolled in an associate or bachelor's degree program graduate within six years. Additionally, as many as 89 percent of single mothers have low incomes and are likely to incur substantial student debt, due in part to the high cost of child care, which can run as high as one-third of a single mother's median income. Most notably, child care for students at higher education institutions has been declining across the country.

If anyone understands the totality of these challenges, it is Gabby Hall. A single mother of three girls, ranging in ages from 10 to 17, Hall is working on her associate degree

at Tarrant County College. "I have been through some really tough times," she said. "Paying important items to keep the water on and the rent paid. Not eating just so they (her daughters) could eat."

Hall says although it was hard to leave the girls' father and risk him not helping, it was much harder to stay in that bad situation. "I became a happier person and better mom by taking one of the toughest steps in my life."

When her oldest daughter, Jeslyn, began rejecting the idea of a college education, Hall worried that decision might stem from the fact that neither Hall nor her ex-husband have college degrees. That realization spurred Hall to check into college for herself. "I wanted to show her it is important and 'walk the talk,' so to speak."

Hall's commitment to getting a degree is having an impact on Jeslyn. "It means a lot to me to watch my mom work so hard to finish college to get her degree. She has

always been a hard worker and always thinks of us. When she started to get her degree, it was a happy moment for me to know she wanted to go farther in her career,” she said. “If anything, it just shows me that if life throws a curve and keeps you busy, with enough determination, you can still get your degree and go to college.”

Hall says she chose TCC because it was nearby and could be managed with her work schedule. TCC also did not seem as intimidating as other schools. “At my age, going back to school at TCC, I could blend in more,” she said.

While working at Walgreens, Hall became friends with Amy Wood when Wood transferred to the same pharmacy in 2011. The two friends shared common ground: they both have three girls and share similar parenting styles. Unfortunately, they both had troubled marriages that ended. “We became each other’s support when needed. Being able to go to work and talk to someone who understood my situation made things a lot easier,” said Wood.

Hall encouraged Wood to start school. “She held me accountable for taking my first step in the enrollment process, and I can’t thank her enough for that,” Wood said. “I didn’t even know where to begin, but she gave me advice and got me started.”



In addition to her friendship with Wood, Hall found camaraderie with two other single mothers when she was selected to appear in the documentary, “A Single Mom’s Story.” Produced by Roadtrip Nation, an organization dedicated to helping people find career and life fulfillment, the documentary featured the three mothers exploring new careers as they worked on their education. Traveling together throughout the country in an RV, the women interviewed other women who successfully found fulfilling careers as microbiologists, professors, authors, artists and more.

Hall found out about the documentary through Brentleigh Snyder, a master social worker with Catholic Charities Fort

Worth. Their program, Stay the Course, helps students become familiar with the college system and manage situations outside of school that affect their ability to work toward graduation. “My job (and passion!) is to assist students with identifying their educational, personal and financial goals,” said Snyder. “I collaborate with students to get (them) connected to community support and services to help them deal with life obstacles to ensure they are able to meet their educational goals.”

After another Catholic Charities employee shared the application for the documentary with Snyder, she says she instantly thought of Hall. “She is one of the hardest-working moms I have ever met, and I thought this could be the opportunity she needed to chase her dreams while continuing to provide for her children.”

Documentary co-producers Lori Benitez and Jasmine Spearing-Bowen said the road trip was fueled by the ECMC Foundation “which has made it one of their priorities to help single moms succeed in higher education.” According to the producers, ensuring single moms have access to educational pathways like community college and connecting them to extra resources they may need is important. “We hope to show single mothers that they aren’t alone—that there’s a community of people waiting to connect with them and support them as they pursue their education. We also wanted to show educators and policymakers how they can start tearing down those roadblocks and help single mothers succeed.”

Hall was chosen to be in the documentary because Benitez and Spearing-Bowen liked her openness and honesty. “Her story felt like it’d be relatable to so many, both in her journey as a single mother and in her dilemma of trying to choose between going down a path toward the career she felt she should do versus what she *wants* to do. Our road trips are designed to help people navigate exactly the types of questions Gabby was facing, so we knew this experience could be something special for her.”

The producers say they like to include interviews that can reach a broad range of viewers, not just the road-trippers, so the film includes advice viewers find relevant. “The response has been amazing!” according to Benitez and Spearing-Bowen. “We recently screened the documentary as part of a live event for single mothers, and they called it ‘inspirational’ and ‘heartwarming.’” They went on to say, “If you’re a single mother, there are tons of resources and an incredible support system out there for you. You don’t have to do it all alone—you just have to reach out and make those connections.”

While the experience was rewarding for the road-trippers, it was challenging, too, because of “serious mom guilt,” Hall admitted. “It was very hard for me to enjoy having fun without feeling ashamed that I was doing all of those things without my kids.” Turns out, all three of the mothers felt that way. “I realized that they were going through the guilt thing just as much as I was, and they were missing their kids as well,” she



Gabby is so resilient. She takes whatever challenges life presents and faces them head on. She is bold, brave and willing to learn. Her journey is much like any other college student—everchanging. What makes her unique is, though she is a student, she is a mom first and that has never wavered.

Brentleigh Snyder
Master Social Worker, Catholic Charities Fort Worth

said. “That really helped me to know I wasn’t alone in my feelings.”

The interviews the moms conducted on their journey were enlightening. These women with careers such as attorney, designer, microbiologist, nurse, politician and professor were single mothers as well. Each of them had valuable advice for the moms.

- Build a strong support system.
- Lean into the things that make you uncomfortable. That’s how you grow and learn.
- Try different areas to see what works best for you.
- Take a class, do well in it and find mentors you can carry with you as you progress through your field.
- It’s okay if it takes a long time to solve a problem and it’s okay to make mistakes. That’s part of the process. Just don’t give up.

Hall entered college just to be a role model for her daughters. “I think it is extremely important for them to see me working hard at it,” she said. She acknowledges managing motherhood, school and work is a balancing act. “I study and do homework with my kids when they do theirs,” she admits.

While she originally planned to major in Nursing, with her recent promotion to store manager at Walgreens, Hall is now thinking of majoring in Business instead. She is leaning toward pursuing her bachelor’s degree in Business at The University of Texas at Arlington. “It makes more sense at this point. I am making good strides in this position, better than I thought I would, so I can see myself to continue to grow,” she said.

So, why is it so hard for moms to work on their education? “I think the reason is because they are moms,” Hall said. “As moms, we are hardwired to put our kids’ needs above our own. I have done it, and I still do it.”

She encourages colleges to specifically reach out to single mothers. “I think we need to be shouting resources from the rooftops,” she said. “Have childcare easily accessible and at all different times and days.”

Wood agrees. “Providing an affordable childcare option would be great for single mothers—either one on site or even just a discount on childcare. This would help prevent mothers from having to work multiple jobs and allow them the time they need to devote to their education.”

Proud of the progress Hall has made, Snyder said, “Gabby is so resilient. She takes whatever challenges life presents and faces them head on. She is bold, brave and willing to learn. Her journey is much like any other college student—everchanging. What makes her unique is, though she is a student, she is a mom first and that has never wavered.”

In turn, Hall praises Snyder. “Every single mom should have a Brentleigh in her corner.”

Snyder urges single mothers wanting to work on their education to reach out to Stay the Course for assistance. “You have been selfless for so long and so focused on others. Stay the Course will allow you the time you need to focus on yourself. We are here to provide additional support, collaborate with you and cheer you on.”

Hall also offers encouragement for single mothers who want more for themselves and their children and are considering education as the path for both. “There is help and resources out there for you, but you have to dig, Momma! Google, talk to other moms, reach out to your campus counselors, get involved on your campus and find those opportunities,” she said. “Most states have resources. Don’t be ashamed to ask for help. As I learned on my road-trip adventure, the most flattery you can give someone is to ask for their help.”

TCC offers a number of resources tailored to meet the needs of single mothers and student parents:

TCC Counseling Services:
<https://www.tccd.edu/services/support-services/counseling/>

Stay the Course:
<https://stay-the-course.org/students/>

Watch “A Single Mom’s Story”:
<https://roadtripnation.com/roadtrip/single-mothers>





Getting Down to Business

TCC OFFERS BUSINESS DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES AT SIGNIFICANT VALUE

By Bill Lace

Leana Gamillo knew exactly what she wanted after graduating from Kennedale High School:

- Study accounting at TCC Southeast
- Bachelor's degree in Accounting (From The University of Texas at Arlington)
- Master's degree (From SMU)
- Employment as an accountant (JTaylor).
- Certified Public Accountant—almost (scheduled for August 2021)

Her decision to make TCC her first stop was, she said, “really easy. If I had gone to a university for four years, I’d be spending around \$30,000 when I could get two years’ worth of the work at TCC for a fraction of that. Plus, I was able to do it in one year and then transfer. So, it was a money and time thing.”

Hundreds of students have had the same reasons as Gamillo for starting their business education at TCC, but not her laser focus on one of the many subsets in the curriculum.

It's common for faculty to ask incoming students what their ultimate goal is. Far and away, the most prevalent answer is "I don't know."

That's just fine for Tyson McMillan, department chair of business and computer science at Trinity River. "I didn't know either," he said. "It kind of finds you during exploratory coursework."

TCC has made that exploration easier with an introductory course, Business Principles, taken by all students. McMillan describes it as "a little bit of everything but not a lot of anything." It's the academic version of a wine tasting. Would you like an accounting aperitif? Or perhaps this banking Bordeaux—rich but reserved. Try this marketing Merlot—bold and a touch brassy.

The selections don't stop there, with communication, economics, finance, human resources, entrepreneurship, leadership and management also on the table.

"We've been talking about Guided Pathways long before pathways became the big buzzword," McMillan said. "You get a taste of each one of them and say, 'Hmmm, this is something I want to explore more.' Like one of my favorite teachers said—take chances, make mistakes."

More and more students are taking that TCC pathway. Enrollment in Business Principles reached a record 1,028 in the fall of 2020, up 48 percent from the previous fall. Gamillo's money and time factors get some of the credit, but there are others. McMillan points to the transferability of courses. "We give our students the same quality as they'd receive in their first two years at a university and guess what? They get to apply those courses as they proceed, perhaps, to an MBA," he said.

Then, too, there's the quality of the faculty. "I notice that, especially in the Business program, we have a lot of people who have not just studied business, but who have worked in it," said TCC Connect Assistant Dean Wanda Moore. "They bring that experience back to the classroom, bridging the gap between theory and practical application."

Faculty members also take on mentor/counselor/advisor roles to help guide students to whatever that ultimate goal becomes. That might be the Associate of Arts preparatory to seeking a bachelor's degree; the Associate of Applied Science for those perhaps wanting a two-year degree in order to get a promotion at work; or, for those who might want some basic skills to run a business, one of two one-year certificate programs.

"We really encourage the students to come to us with questions," said Karen Haun, professor of accounting at TCC Southeast. "We encourage them to run their degree plans and let us go over it with them to see what they're missing, what classes they need to take."

Students' education goes beyond the classroom. "We are really committed to the development of soft skills," said Haun. Budding accountants, for instance, are urged to participate in the United Way's VITA (Volunteer Income

Tax Assistance) Program. Even during the pandemic, students were able to staff drive-through tax return centers at TCC South, Southeast and Trinity River.

Faculty also help students look beyond the degree toward universities to which they might transfer. "Because of changes in financial aid and changes at the state and federal levels, we're trying to help them hone in on that as quickly as we can," said TCC Northwest instructor Lourdes Ramboa. "They begin to talk about it and how this or that might be transferable."

Yet another common faculty function is to tamp down anxieties. For instance, students in such disciplines as accounting and finance may worry that they're deficient in math. "I tell them that I've had two whole math classes in my entire 13 years of college—from TCC to a Ph.D. and back," said McMillan.

And if Haun's students say they're not very good in math, she answers, "I'm not either. I can add, subtract, multiply and divide using a calculator. Accounting is not math; it's logic."

Even Gamillo's journey, for all her assurance and certainty, started with qualms. Before her first TCC accounting class with Haun, she had butterflies. "I was scared," she said. "This was my first course, and I was banking my life on this accounting thing and what if I hated it? But she made it seem so simple and really drew me in."

To learn more about TCC's Business degrees and certificates, visit:

<https://www.tccd.edu/academics/courses-and-programs/programs-a-z/credit/business/>

According to *Business Degree Central*, TCC is one of the nation's most outstanding online business schools and the Most Popular Online Business Degree School in Texas.

Learn more: **<https://news.tccd.edu/2021/02/23/tcc-one-of-the-nations-top-online-business-schools/>**

MOM, VIDEO GAMES AND A

HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY TEACHER TURNS IT GURU

By Jody Wasson

Jennifer Lynn is a game-changer in more ways than one. This mother of four boys, a former lab technician and seven-year veteran as a high school physics and chemistry teacher, believes she can improve the classroom experience for students in her (and neighboring) school districts through game, simulation and animation design.

Because of the high market demand for IT professionals, Lynn chose to earn her first Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in IT Networking as a way to transition from teaching to her new field and is currently pursuing her second AAS degree in IT Game, Simulation & Animation Design. After graduation, she'll continue to hone her skills to let her "inner gamer" thrive.

When there's time, Lynn is a fan of video games, much like her boys, who think it's more than "cool" that their mom is on her way to an interesting new career. But while Lynn has chosen networking as her new "day job," her end goal is to leverage her TCC education and professional experience to join one of the on-trend game development companies located in North Texas, such as Mumbojumbo, Arcade, Fathomd or GearBox.

Before any of that can happen, however, Lynn will don her cap and gown this May as a graduate of the class of 2021, with her second Associate of Applied Science degree. Through the IT Game, Simulation & Animation Design program, Lynn has learned to write computer code to create simulated computer-based chemistry experiments to meet the State's chemistry lab requirement and supplement what her and other small, rural North Texas school districts cannot easily afford.

"I'd been thinking about a career change. That's what TCC has offered to me and offers to lots of other older adults. The College offers so much to those of us looking to make those big changes in our lives," she said. "So, when I began thinking seriously about a career change, a friend suggested that I take some online career and

skills inventory assessments to explore where my interests and aptitudes lay outside of teaching high school physics and chemistry."

She was surprised when several of the job interest inventories showed a higher-than-expected aptitude and interest in technology. "I'd never used computers in the ways the career inventories suggested, plus I didn't know one computer field from another, but that's what led me to TCC. I knew I could get quality advising, afford classes and gain a set of solid marketable skills with degrees that would complement my career as a high school chemistry teacher," said Lynn.

According to Donald Cunningham, professor of information technology, Lynn is a highly detailed and very motivated person who, in her final course for the program demonstrated her dedication, professional work ethic and high degree of IT acumen. "She explores each assignment in greater depth than is needed and applies the advanced knowledge to her course work and projects. These things lend themselves to her being successful in any area she applies her talents," said Cunningham.

As program coordinator, Cunningham suggests some students might consider careers as video game developers, animators for film and television and other technical jobs in the entertainment industry, not to mention, area defense contractors and the U.S. Department of Defense. Cunningham's goal is to equip students with the skills needed to use the newest software, coding languages and technology to meet the most cutting-edge industry standards. "TCC's students can cross the stage at graduation and through the doors as employees of well-known gaming, simulation or animation companies—many of which are right in our back yard," he said.

Texas has played a major role in the computer and video game industry since the 1980s and continues to remain a growing hub for production, meaning significant opportunity for graduates of this program. Additionally, the state is currently home to more than 130 animation, post-production and visual effects companies that supply support and talent to the local and worldwide film, advertising, education and video game industries, according to the Texas Film Commission.

Burning Glass Technologies, an analytics software company that supplies real-time data on job growth, skills in demand and labor market trends, reports that gaming and animation companies in North Texas can expect greater than 14 percent growth over the next 10 years. An entry-level salary begins somewhere in the range of \$40,000, while those with more experience can command as much as \$80,000 per year. The median income, once again estimated by Burning Glass, hovers around \$66,000 for artists and technicians with more experience.

According to Woody Wu, professor of IT, gaming and IT companies want graduates who not only are creative, but who can collaborate with

CAREER CHANGE



I'd been thinking about a career change. That's what TCC has offered to me and offers to lots of other older adults. The College offers so much to those of us looking to make those big changes in our lives.

Jennifer Lynn
TCC Student

diverse groups. "Cooperating with peers leads to greater outcomes in mastering the defining skills required for employment in this sector. It's common for several groups of designers to be working collaboratively on different components of a game, since design isn't exactly a solo endeavor," he said.

Lynn plans to continue teaching high school chemistry in her small, funding-challenged high school until her current contract expires. At that point, she'll make her big jump. "My plan is to transition to my new career in IT through computer networking, which is a field with current high job demand. However, I'm interested in applying Unreal Engines—a complete suite of creation tools for game development—to improve the quality of simulation available for students. And so, yes, for now, games and simulations are still a hobby," she said.

When the timing is right and with some IT networking experience under her belt, Lynn plans to take her hobby and turn it into full-time job.

"I plan on having a great résumé and portfolio to show prospective employers what I can do through hard work and the education TCC afforded me," said Lynn.

Before she leaves the classroom behind, Lynn says she will encourage her current high school students to consider the sciences. "I let the girls know they may be the one girl in the class, and to not let that stop them from following their passions and going as far as they can," she said.

Students enrolled in the Game, Simulation & Animation Design program take many courses centered squarely on games, simulations and animation including 3D Game Modeling, Game and Simulation Programming Game Design Animation Programming Video Game Art, 3D Animation and Fundamentals of Network Security.

To learn more about TCC's Associate of Applied Science degree and certificates in Game, Simulation & Animation Design, visit:

<https://www.tccd.edu/academics/courses-and-programs/programs-a-z/credit/information-technology/game-simulation-and-animation-design/>



Challenge Accepted!

LIFELONG LEARNERS IN SENIOR ED NAVIGATE ONLINE LEARNING IN THE PANDEMIC

By Bill Lace

Jackie Peel, certified Master Gardener, was ready to throw in the towel. She had taught the “Gardening in North Texas” class for TCC Northeast’s Senior Education program since 2012, but the “transplant” from in-person to virtual instruction had taken a toll.

“Part of it might have been a mental block on my part,” Peel said. “It was a steep learning curve, but we made it.”

Even so, her difficulties, coupled with the prospect of an out-of-state move, led to her to tell Bill Morton, curriculum coordinator for Senior Ed at TCC Northeast, that she would not teach in the spring semester. But, when he relayed this to his advisory council, some members of which had been Peel’s students, there was an outcry.

“So, I encouraged them to get in touch with her and persuade her to change her mind,” Morton said. “And, lo and behold, they did!”

“That was a surprise,” Peel said, “and a nice one, I’d say, because I didn’t anticipate that kind of loyalty.”

She relented, but nevertheless is trying to recruit other Master Gardeners to eventually take over the class. “I wasn’t about to leave them in the lurch,” she said. “This is a passion of mine. This is my baby.”

This story illustrates the dedication of those who teach them and the ability of both to adapt to changes forced on them by the pandemic.

Other instructors and their students made the switch. Dutch Baughman took his fly-fishing class online through Zoom, using one camera for some demonstrations, such as casting, and a second to record the closeup work, such as tying knots. “It’s a very hands-on, show-me kind of class,” he said. “But we’re trying to adapt the best we can. We’ve grown together through this evolution, and I think we accept it now that, yes, this is the way things are done.”

Still, he said, the students are losing a lot by not having in-person interaction,

“ You can sign in on your computer, register for a course and the interaction with another human being is so warm, welcoming and needed that the individuals are looking forward to the next week to their next class.

Scott Hurbough
CEE Director, TCC Northeast



not only in what they learn from Baughman, but also in what they take from one another. Some students, for instance, met at a restaurant for a pre-class meal. “They can’t do that now,” he said, “but it’s missing in other elements of their lifestyle, as well.”

Also diminished has been what Baughman has been experiencing from his students, seeing the expressions on their faces when they begin to understand a concept. “It brings me a lot of joy,” he said. “And when those people are at an age when they thought there wouldn’t be too much to motivate them anymore, it’s a pretty enlightening thing.”

At TCC South, a highlight of the annual Senior Bash had long been Bingo. So, when the event was conducted virtually last fall, Community Education Coordinator Erika Zimmerman emailed Bingo cards to participants and read out the numbers online over Microsoft Teams. Winners received giveaway items—by mail—as prizes. The game was such a hit that Zimmerman continued it, adding other games, such as Pokeno, along the way.

Seminar-type classes such as those dealing with history and civics largely survived, but many hands-on classes simply could not manage the switch. Morton cited Quilting, Personal Safety/Self Defense and Painting as examples. Others not offered included Square Dancing, Tai Chi and Weight Training. The most predictable casualty was Water Aerobics. Not only could participants not take laptops or tablets into a pool, there were no pools open on campuses into which to take them.

In addition, many seniors wanted to participate but lacked the computer skills. “If seniors were not computer literate when the pandemic began,” Morton said, “there was no way we could make them computer literate to access all of the materials they needed to do virtual classes.”

Those seniors who had some degree of tech savviness, however, surprised program coordinators and, quite probably, themselves. “At the beginning, I was apprehensive about the students learning to use the Blackboard software,” said TCC Northwest’s Irma Molina, “but overall I was very happy to see that we had a great turnout of seniors participating online. They love the programming. It actually shows why CE is here for us.”

Scott Hurbough, CEE director at TCC Northeast since October, praised not only seniors’ ability to take on new technology, but also TCC’s efforts at guiding the transition. “I’m so impressed at the way they’ve integrated access for seniors into each step they’re taking,” he said.

Hurbough also looked past the educational aspects of Senior Ed to the wider sociological aspects. “Imagine yourself as a senior and the COVID and you’re isolated at home,” he said. “You have no one living at home with you. You do have technology. You’re used to coming to TCC at least once or twice a week for the senior courses. Now, you’re isolated. Maybe you see Meals on Wheels and that’s it.

“But you can sign in on your computer, register for a course and the interaction with another human being is so warm, welcoming and needed that the individuals are looking forward to the next week to their next class. It’s opened up a way for our seniors to feel still part of our world. They’re still trying to be healthy, still trying to be safe, but they need some form of human interaction.”

Morton added another perspective. Since everything was online, that meant seniors anywhere could take any class, regardless of which campus was offering it. “It has brought the Senior Advisory councils from each campus—at least the executive committees—together, working much more closely and trying to adapt our individual councils to our one-college concept,” he said. “So it’s been helpful for the students, and it’s also been helpful for the advisory councils. I think, in the future, that we’re going to be able to continue to work more closely together and coordinate our activities.”

The pandemic, he said, offered two opportunities. “One thing I told to the instructors was that this was not only an opportunity for all of us to continue learning in the different fields of interest that we’re studying, but it’s also an opportunity for us to become familiar with this technology that was new for all of us,” he said, “So, it was another challenge, another learning opportunity, another silver lining behind a dark cloud.”

For more information about TCC’s Senior Education opportunities, visit <https://www.tccd.edu/academics/cee/lifelong-learning/senior-education/>.

THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

ELEMENTS OF TIMING AND PASSION
CONVERGE TO CREATE A FORMIDABLE
CAREER FOR TCC PROFESSOR

By Rita L.B. Parson

Design was on the mind of TCC professor Mohamed Chehbouni when, as a teenager, he struck out on his own to Germany from his native Morocco. After one year at the local university, his desire to attend a top university was feasible because tuition was free, and he would be allowed to work off campus to earn living expenses.

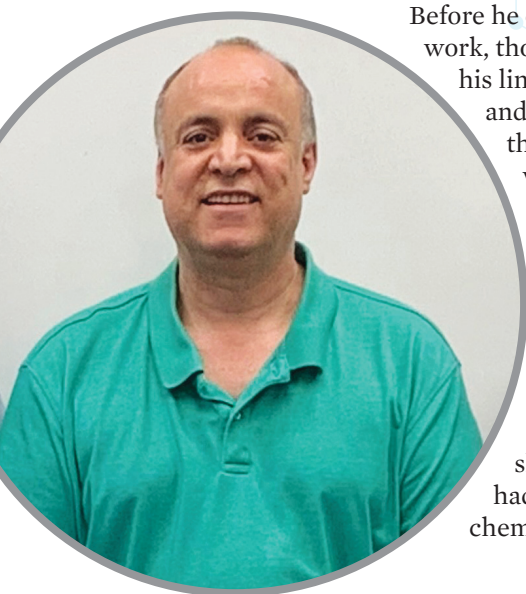
Before he could start his college course work, though, Chehbouni had to expand his linguistic skills beyond Arabic and French to include German, the language in which his classes would be taught. One semester later, after proving his German efficiency, his desired major still remained beyond his grasp. Would his yearning to study the “fingerprint” distinction of European architecture prove strong enough for him to delay his education again? Or should he settle on a major that had a spring semester start such as chemistry, math or physics so he could

begin his studies?

When he entered the doors of his daily chemistry lab, trading his dreams of fashioning brick and mortar for the present opportunity to explore smashing molecules, Chehbouni had no idea that his life would be altered forever. Once he warmed up to chemistry, he never looked back.

“I did not like it at the beginning, however, (in) time, it was a real joy when I ended up figuring out the unknown or finding out the correct yield after very hard work,” Chehbouni recalled. Since those early days in the chemistry lab, he has distinguished himself as a noted academician who influences students to engage in ways they never envisioned. His passion for his embraced field has inspired international acclaim, allowing him to open the doors of possibility to others.

Chebouni earned his undergraduate degree in polymer chemistry from the University of Applied Sciences in Aachen. At the urging of an older brother who lived in Arizona, Chehbouni—the seventh of eight children, decided to pursue his doctorate in the United States. His brother, a leading doctoral environmental scientist and the recipient of many international awards, helped him with the move. Seeking a post graduate degree was a natural



step for Chehbouni. His parents had worked hard to ensure that he and his siblings earned college degrees, he said, adding that five of their children have earned graduate degrees, including three at the doctorate level.

"I had to learn English since I could only speak French, Arabic and German. First, I joined the English Center at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Once I passed the test for English as a second language, I applied to Ph.D. programs at various universities," he said. He selected Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK, as it offered his desired research topic, a full scholarship as a teaching/research assistant and waived out-of-state tuition throughout the program.

It was there he fell in love with the classroom. "I found passion for teaching when I worked as a teaching assistant. It was rewarding to see the joy on the students' faces when they understood complicated topics about chemistry," he said. "I knew right away that I will be seeking a job in academia after graduation."

A highlight of his academic career at OSU occurred during his graduation. Chehbouni was selected to represent all masters and doctorate students when he greeted then-President George W. Bush, OSU's commencement keynote speaker, and sat behind him on the podium during his speech. "Out of 25,000 students, a student with a first name Mohamed, who speaks English as a fourth language, was selected to represent all graduate students and shake hands with the President of the United States," he said. "That says something about the United States: It does not matter who you are or which country you are from; as long as you excel in what you are doing, you will be recognized."

After earning his Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry in fall 2006, Chehbouni became an assistant professor at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, OK, and was promoted to associate professor with tenure in 2011. He secured his fulltime position as an associate professor at TCC after spending 11 years driving four hours in some cases to teach less than an hour. The drive was motivated by his love, dedication and devotion to the students who showed up each class period for his classes.

"That is what set him apart for me in the interview process. Determination and commitment, focused on doing what's needed to support his college and students," said Zena Jackson, vice president for academic affairs for TCC Southeast. "Since Dr. Chehbouni's arrival to Tarrant County College, he has stepped up as a committed faculty

member and created opportunities for his students. He is passionate about chemistry and has a strong desire for students to love it as much as he does."

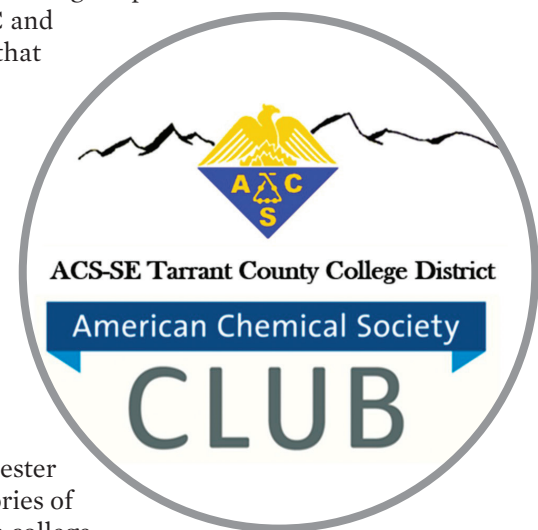
When he joined the TCC faculty fulltime in 2017, Chehbouni's paramount concern for students moved him to immediately "(start) looking for possible collaborations between TCC and neighboring universities so that the students (would) have access to state-of-the-art instruments, such as Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy, Thermal Gravimetric Analyzer, X-Ray Diffraction instruments," he said.

Even as he sought those partnerships, Chehbouni invested in students by starting a chapter of the American Chemistry Society (ACS) during his second semester at TCC Southeast. His memories of his own financial struggles in college prompted him to secure a startup grant to fund the cost of the student officers' dues for required memberships in the national organization.

Establishing the chapter was important "to give the students a platform to engage with other chemistry students nationwide. The students will have a chance to listen to invited speakers from various fields, in nursing, pharmacy, medicine etc.," he said. "They also will be able to visit various universities and companies and learn about scholarship opportunities offered. This way, the students will gain a good knowledge and can, therefore, make a sound judgment on which school to attend after graduating from TCC."

During his first summer at TCC Southeast, Chehbouni developed a collaboration with Texas Christian University working with Omar R. Harvey, associate professor of Geology, Department of Geological Sciences. He was appointed a Visiting Research Scholar at TCU as a result of his work. He served for two years, leaving with an open-ended invitation to return.

Harvey, who met Chehbouni when they were both volunteering as judges at a Fort Worth high school science fair, recalled telling his wife that "within five minutes of conversing, it became clear that this guy was living his



purpose and he knew it. Mo (as Chehbouni affectionately is known) was oozing with joy at teaching chemistry and now getting to do it at TCC. He recounted in an amazing nonchalant manner his daily pre-TCC trip of driving two hours each way to teach his beloved chemistry class at Southeastern Oklahoma State University—sometimes to teach a single 50-minute session. Knowing Mo’s character like I do now, I have no doubt he would have driven further if it meant just one student got to learn something about chemistry.”

Chebouni’s work beyond the boundaries of TCC at TCU resulted in his invitation to be the keynote speaker at the International Conference in Applied and Theory of Nanostructures (ICATN) 2019 in Kenitra, Morocco.

The significance of his presentation extended beyond interacting with colleagues, he said.

“I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to increase awareness of research conducted at community colleges in general and at Tarrant County College in particular. Since the conference was hosted by a university in Morocco, I had a chance to talk not only to the scientific community, but the students as well. Most of the students in Morocco know the US education system at universities, but not at a community college. I had the opportunity to answer several students’ questions regarding how to apply to TCC transfer courses and what opportunities they have.”

Chebouni continues to teach at the community college level because its value to students remains just as critical to him today as when he first recognized it. He recently was selected to mentor a graduate STEM student at The University of Texas at Arlington who is interested in a community college teaching career. “The goal of the program is to give the graduate student a view of how TCC faculty use evidence-based teaching practices to improve STEM education and

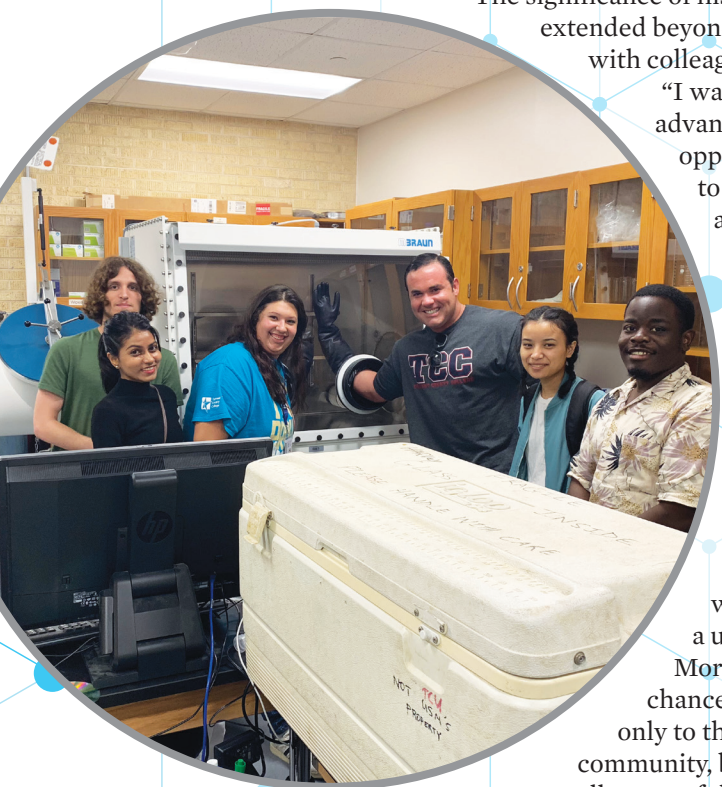
promote the success of our diverse students,” said Jean Maines, professor of biology and co-department chair of biological sciences at TCC Northeast. Maines serves as part of the leadership team of the Texas Regional Collaborative with Aspire, which, according to their website has two objectives:

- (1) To foster the engagement of four-year institutions and partnering two-year institutions for the purpose of creating a diversified and well-prepared pool of future STEM faculty; and
- (2) To develop programs that will allow graduate STEM students from UTEP, UT Arlington, UT Tyler, and UT Permian Basin to explore the possibility of a rewarding career at two-year institutions through meaningful and intensive mentoring relationships.

“The program pairs a UTA STEM graduate student interested in a community college teaching career with a STEM faculty member at TCC. The goal of the program is to give the graduate student a view of how TCC faculty use evidence-based teaching practices to improve STEM education and promote the success of our diverse students,” said Maines. “The student will visit Dr. Chehbouni’s classroom (virtually) to observe his teaching and together they will develop curriculum materials (a lesson on a specific topic) that the graduate student could deliver in the class. Dr. Chehbouni was chosen to serve as a mentor in this program because of his excellence as a chemistry faculty member.”

“When I joined TCC as an adjunct instructor while teaching full time in Durant, I realized that the students have a better chance to graduate on time if they started at a community college. In addition, the small classes allow students to access the instructors more easily unlike big universities. During the overlap, I was in a better position to compare both systems. I can tell with confidence that the education system at community colleges is student friendlier than in universities,” Chehbouni said, “At TCC, for instance, most courses are offered at least twice a year, and sometimes even during summer I and/or II. At universities, some courses are offered either during the fall or spring semester. If a student misses taking the sequel, he or she is forced to wait for one year to able retake it again. It automatically jeopardizes the student’s plan to graduate on time.”

Chebouni has given more 30 presentations at the national and international level, including an abstract of a paper presentation at the 257th National Conference of the American Chemical Society in Orlando, FL., and a presentation at the 258th National Conference of the American Chemical Society in San Diego, CA. He also is the author of several peer-reviewed papers, has reviewed several manuscripts and has secured more than \$70,000 in grants from various agencies. He holds several



awards including the best paper award from the American Ceramic Society, Material Science and Technology.

The contributions he makes to the field of chemistry manifest themselves in what he brings to students in his classroom, according to William Coppola, president of TCC Southeast.

“Students who are pursuing careers in STEM, and specifically chemistry, will look to Dr. Chehbouni’s accomplishments as an indicator to connect with him in his classes and through his academic research. His achievements are a definite way to recruit students for our College at large, especially students interested in studying chemistry,” Coppola said. “Already, Dr. Chehbouni is active in judging science fairs and competitions at high schools. His presence will reinforce his talents and knowledge in such a way to encourage students to attend TCC Southeast.”

Once enrolled at TCC, students can benefit even further from Chehbouni’s ongoing investment in them.

“He provides students with outreach opportunities that connect them with other students around TCC and at universities such as TCU and UTA. His impact is evident in students’ acceptance at universities such as TWU, Tarleton, Skaggs Graduate School of Chemical and Biological Sciences at Scripps Research,” Coppola said. “Dr. Chehbouni brings much to the campus community and is passionate about seeing his students and colleagues succeed. As an active member of our college community, he continually contributes to the mission and vision of TCC.”

His administrator, Thomas Awtry, dean of math, science, engineering and health and physical education at TCC Southeast, agreed.

“Dr. Chehbouni is an energetic and productive faculty member who has been very successful with student engagement both in and outside the classroom. In the classroom, he is organized, has good questioning skills and uses technology effectively to reach, engage and assess students,” Awtry said. “I appreciate that when he questions students, he doesn’t just stop with the initial question, but asks good follow-up questions to guide student learning a step further.”

With all he has accomplished and continuously gives to his students, Chehbouni has visions of creating even more educational opportunities for them.

“(I want to) develop a research course at Southeast Campus so that students can gain experience in research,” he said. “In addition, I am hoping to offer all courses in both face-to-face and blended format to give the same chance to students who cannot attend the class twice a week.”

Chebouni’s dedication to their education is not lost on his former students.

“Dr. Chehbouni has been particularly helpful in guiding students’ educational goals through arranging special guest speakers from different areas of study, relative to science,” said Mike V. Mabry, a former ACS Student

Chapter president who now cultivates exotic plants for mass distribution with plans to own his own farms. “He has done an excellent job. He shows students how to be true artists of their craft and gives them the means to pursue it. The response I have seen from students is that; they are absolutely adamant about gaining his approval, he motivates them that well.”

Vy Nguyen, also an ACS club officer who became a supplementary instructor for Chehbouni’s classes, credits him for her development. “I have gotten to develop my leadership skills and communication skills,” Nguyen said. “The ACS is an awesome place for students to make friends, share our interests, explore new things and learn from each other.”

Things she learned in his classroom impact her in other areas.

“Dr. Mo has a very clear and descriptive plan of what he wants students to take away from his course. The greatest takeaway from Dr. Mo’s course is time management,” Nguyen said “I have never thought it was important until I took his class. He had a detailed schedule for each week, assignments/homework due for students to schedule their learning accordingly.

“I am still utilizing this method to schedule my weekly works and assignments. Although there were some low-energy weeks that I cannot bring myself to finish assignments, following the schedule somehow motivated me to get things done,” she said. “I love his teaching style: very organized and knowledge driven. Dr. Mo wants every student to take the most out of his classes and to prepare them for their future career, not just for mere grades on their degrees. Ever since I have met Dr. Mo, it was like opening a huge door of opportunity.”

Students interested in chemistry at TCC can learn more at: <https://www.tccd.edu/academics/courses-and-programs/programs-a-z/credit/chemistry/>

Dr. Chehbouni is an energetic and productive faculty member who has been very successful with student engagement both in and outside the classroom. In the classroom, he is organized, has good questioning skills and uses technology effectively to reach, engage and assess students.

Thomas Awtry
Dean of Math, Science, Engineering
and Health and Physical Education,
TCC Southeast

LEARN TO DISCERN



HARNESSING THE POWER OF WEBINARS TO EDUCATE, ENGAGE STUDENTS

By Reginald Lewis

When the pandemic hit last year, many people loaded their work and social calendars with videoconferences and virtual gatherings to stay connected.

Digital technologies, including webinars, quickly became a valuable tool for many educators at all levels as schools, colleges and universities had to shift to remote learning for extended periods of time.

For faculty at Tarrant County College's fully accredited virtual campus, TCC Connect, this wasn't a significant problem. They'd already been leveraging a host of digital technologies to deliver award-winning instruction to students anywhere, at any time.

Misty Wilson-Mehrtens, assistant professor of history, Allegra Davis Hanna, instructor of English, and Angela Thurman, department chair of economics and sciences, joined forces to produce a free webinar series, Learn to Discern, to help keep online learners engaged in civic and community issues. Wilson-Mehrtens created the series in 2017; she is quick, however, to share any credit with colleagues.

"This really was a team effort. When developing this webinar series, our intention was to create interdisciplinary discourse on topics relevant to students," said Wilson-Mehrtens. "Many of the webinars explicitly make connections between inquiry and critical thinking, or to closely related topics like media literacy."

She added that these webinars help students learn how to find and evaluate sources of information; how to question and investigate; and, how to avoid confirmation bias. "We also hope that they see the connections between our disciplines and that you can approach the same topic from many angles."

Any TCC student can join live or watch recordings of the webinars. Back in 2017, only a few students were watching

the recordings. Today, hundreds of students are joining live or watching the recording of the webinars, which feature accomplished TCC faculty who are experts in their fields.

Currently, more than 30 webinars have been recorded and posted to the Learn to Discern YouTube channel. Previous webinar topics include the 2020 general election, language in politics and generational power in America.

"During election years, our webinars help students find reliable information about candidates and ballot measures, connect students with voter registrations efforts and model for students how to approach academic discourse," Wilson-Mehrtens explained. "We also spend a lot of time encouraging them to get involved in their community, whether that's by voting or by volunteering."

At the conclusion of each webinar, students are polled to gain insight on topics they'd like covered in future webinars, theme development, events or issues to explore and guest speakers. The goal for the team is to offer between four and six webinars each semester.

Student feedback continues to be positive, with one student stating, "I appreciate the breakdown of demographics, unbiased, facts. The women on the panel were intelligent and did not have a screaming match to have the information put out. I applaud the professionalism, and I was not forced to listen to anyone lean towards one party over the other." A second student called a Fall 2020 webinar an "amazing presentation," while another said, "The topic was covered well, and the usage of real-life examples helped to engage the audience."

Analytics show that TCC students not only like webinars covering topics related to civic engagement, but also those focusing on conspiracy theories, fake news and homelessness.

"The series has become very popular with students and



WEBINAR

has grown tremendously in the past two or three years,” said Sherri Matta, assistant professor of psychology at TCC Connect. “Each semester, the topics are relevant to what is happening in our local communities. I believe that these webinars have encouraged students to learn beyond the classroom and engage in their local community.”

Over the years, Matta has spearheaded several Learn to Discern webinars, including “Sex Trafficking in North Texas,” “PTSD in Civilian First Responders” and “Veterans After Conflict.”

“If I present the topic alone, I create a PowerPoint so students can follow along,” said Matta. “If I bring in an outside resource, I research who the top three professionals are on that particular topic and I invite participation.”

When the coronavirus pandemic hit in 2020, some people were concerned about a drop in student participation. Yet, the webinar series didn’t miss a beat.

On the production side, TCC Connect faculty moved from conducting webinars from the same room to using Microsoft Teams to complete the same functions, all from home. Faculty collaboration also evolved, as more instructors from across the District began sharing information through the Learn to Discern webinar series

once on-campus programming came to a halt.

“Our instructors are definitely addressing critical thinking in the classroom, but the webinar series adds to what they are learning by engaging them outside of the class and applying it to current events,” said Cristina Sullivan, interim vice president of academic affairs.

Webinars during the Spring 2021 term focused on social media-related topics. Wilson-Mehrtens expects topics for the Fall 2021 term to be informed by student requests and interests. Sullivan believes there are opportunities for the webinar series to grow in popularity.

“I truly believe there is a possibility of partnering with community or industry partners to expand the scope of the webinar series because of the collaborative and creative nature of my campus faculty.”

Some students were so moved by the “Sex Trafficking in North Texas” webinar, they volunteered for internships with Mosaic Family Services and Refuge City, organizations that provide individuals with safe housing, counseling and medical attention.

To watch any Learn to Discern webinars, visit the YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9q-WxW6rG01eKfjxSTi_Tg

CURRENTLY, MORE THAN 30 WEBINARS HAVE BEEN RECORDED AND POSTED TO THE LEARN TO DISCERN YOUTUBE CHANNEL. PREVIOUS WEBINAR TOPICS INCLUDE THE 2020 GENERAL ELECTION, LANGUAGE IN POLITICS AND GENERATIONAL POWER IN AMERICA.



Food for

CONNECTING NUTRITION TO BRAIN HEALTH

By Gina Brasseur

It's easy to understand that eating an entire box of toaster pastries is less healthy than eating fruits or vegetables, but among the healthy foods, are some choices better than others? Food affects the function of the entire body, but one area that is of particular interest to researchers is the effect of nutrition on brain function. According to early findings reported by a researcher at Rush University Medical Center, poor nutrition is the cause of a certain type of dementia.

DEMYSTIFYING DEMENTIA

According to the Alzheimer's Association, dementia is a general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life. It may be caused by nutritional deficiencies, injury, disease or age-related decline.

With the aging of the Baby Boomer generation and the onset of the Silver Tsunami, an estimated 131 million people worldwide may be living with some form of dementia by 2050, according to the World Alzheimer's Report. But can anything be done to delay or even avoid the onset of brain-related decline?

"The brain is a highly metabolic active organ. It requires a lot of nutrients for it to function continuously," said Christina Liew-Newville, assistant professor and dietetic technician program director at TCC Southeast. "In addition to glucose, which serves as the primary fuel for the brain, many vitamins and minerals are essential for brain development, function and maintenance."

Recent studies found that dementia caused by nutrition deficiencies can be prevented or even reversed. According

to dementia.org, eating a diet rich in B vitamins with fruits, vegetables and whole grains will prevent and reverse dementia that is caused by nutritional deficiencies.

"A diet high in refined carbohydrates is typically lower in nutrients and fiber. Regular consumption of this diet can lead to nutrient deficiencies," Liew-Newville said.

KNOW YOUR ABCS

Having a brain-healthy diet is more than eating a specific food or taking vitamins A, B or C.

"Food provides the building blocks of your body. If you want your house to last a long time, you want to build a good foundation. Nutrition is the foundation of health. For your body to function optimally, it is important to have adequate nutrient intake. Your body needs nutrients to build, repair itself and regenerate," said Liew-Newville. "Some of the foods [that might improve brain function] are avocado, blueberries, fatty fish, leafy green vegetables, turmeric, nuts and seeds such as almonds, flaxseed and walnuts."

Researchers have discovered some promising results from people using the MIND diet.

"MIND diet stands for Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay. It adopts the components of Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet, which is a dietetic approach to lowering blood pressure," according to Liew-Newville. "The MIND diet encourages regular consumption of green leafy vegetables, berries, nuts, legumes, fish and olive

Thought

oil. It discourages intake of red meat, sweets, cheese, butter/margarine and fried food.

“The MIND diet may be able to improve cognitive functions.”

Fat is an important dietary element, according to Dawn Blevins, dietary manager program coordinator at TCC Southeast. “Small amounts of fat are essential to a healthy and balanced diet. Over the long term, if we do not consume adequate amounts of fat, we can see vitamin deficiencies, trouble concentrating or mental fatigue, dry skin, dry eyes and hormonal problems.”

Fat also is one of the major nutrients that bodies need. “It is used in the structures of the cell membrane, hormone production, production of Vitamin D, bile acid and insulation. Fat is especially important for brain cells and brain functions,” said Liew-Newville. “Consumption of monounsaturated fats (MUFA) and omega 3 fats lower the risk of heart disease and related death. Good sources of MUFA include olive oil, avocados, almonds and peanuts. Omega-3 fats are found in fatty fish, flaxseed and chia seed,” she continued.

Dietary fat is needed for the body to absorb fat-soluble vitamins like Vitamin A, D and E, though Blevins noted there are differences in the type of fat a person eats. “Good fats are the monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats that we get from nuts, seeds, grain and vegetables. These are good for us because they provide essential fatty acids that the body cannot make on its own, and they support the absorption of all the other wonderful nutrients in these foods.”

TCC'S DIETETIC PROGRAMS

Tarrant County College offers five different degrees or certificates in Nutrition for students who are interested in wellness, nutrition, health promotion, public health and chronic disease prevention. Students can earn a Healthy Meal Planning Occupational Skills Award; Certificate of Completion Nutrition Specialist I; Certificate of Completion Food and Nutrition Coach; Certificate of Completion Dietary Manage or Associate of Applied Sciences degree as a Dietetic Technician.

“Job opportunities in this career path include hospitals, long-term care facilities, community agencies, corporate wellness, fitness industry, food service management and consulting and coaching,” Liew-Newville said.

In the Dietetics Lab at TCC Southeast, students practice doing nutrition assessments, providing diet education and documenting patient information. Students also can join the Student Dietetic Organization (SDO). The club provides information about the dietetic program, as well as serves students and their families through the promotion of good nutrition, health and well-being.

Though the causes of early onset and increased cognitive decline among the general population are not yet known, many dietary professionals are now focused on the role of nutrition for the maintenance of health rather than the treatment of disease. “It is not too late to change. Even making small changes in your diet can have positive effects on your health,” Liew-Newville said.

The fad diets of the '80s supported a lot of misinformation and may have steered the public in the wrong direction toward unhealthy, unbalanced diets.

Dawn Blevins
Dietary Manager Program
Coordinator, TCC Southeast

The Worst Foods for Your Brain, according to WebMD.com:

1. Margarine and Frosting
2. Alcohol
3. Soda and Other Sugary Drinks
4. Diet Sodas and Drinks With Artificial Sweeteners
5. French Fries and Other Fried Foods
6. Doughnuts
7. White Bread and White Rice
8. Red Meat
9. Butter and Full-Fat Cheese
10. Swordfish and Ahi Tuna
11. Bottled Dressings, Marinades and Syrups

SEND IN THE CLOWN

ALUMNUS EDWARD FITZGERALD SPREADS THE SMILES THROUGH BOTH HIS HOBBY AND HIS FINANCIAL SUPPORT

By Paul Sturiale

When Edward Fitzgerald talks about donations involving more than just writing a check, he's not clowning around.

Since Fitzgerald graduated in 2013 from Tarrant County College (TCC) with an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree in Nursing, the former scholarship recipient has supplemented his financial support to the Tarrant County College Foundation's general fund with generous donations of what he considers the ultimate gifts: time and talent.

Fitzgerald has consistently supported TCC's nursing program in myriad ways, including promoting the program to prospective students at educational events; honoring nursing program graduates; teaching CPR classes; and, qualifying scholarship recipients.

"I appreciate and admire Edward's continued commitment to TCC and our alumni, especially the nursing alums," said Gloria Fisher, former alumni specialist and scholarship manager at the Foundation. "Edward attended almost as many nurse pinning ceremonies as I did. He is also a highly valued member of the Scholarship Selection Committee, as he was once a scholarship recipient himself, and has assisted with new Scholarship Committee member orientation."

Fitzgerald sees his ongoing involvement with TCC as a way to show his deep appreciation for the academic foundation, financial assistance and counseling support he received while in TCC's nursing program. The father of three is currently senior clinical coordinator at a local dialysis and kidney treatment clinic.

"Actually, I found my job through a job fair at TCC," Fitzgerald said. "As part of the school's work-study program, I had a chance to work in several types of medical facilities. I learned that I did not want to work in a hospital setting. But I saw there were a lot of other types of facilities where you could use your skills."

Fitzgerald constantly flashes his ready smile and sharp wit, especially when he discusses his main passion. Since the early 1990s, individually and as part of an eight-member troupe, Fitzgerald has been a professional and volunteer clown at charitable, medical and service organizations' events, especially those including children and seniors. He has spent more than two decades making children and seniors laugh at events sponsored by the Make-A-Wish Foundation of North Texas chapters in Dallas and Fort Worth; Children's Medical Center of Dallas; and, Texas Department of Family Protective Services facilities in Dallas and Fort Worth.

He also has spent more than 25 years consistently visiting seniors in nursing homes, where he has performed at parties and social events, read, played games, judged contests and regularly called bingo games at a senior center.

Though he has had to curtail some of his clown activities because of family and professional commitments, Fitzgerald recognizes that the personal dedication that makes his clown work so successful is also the same motivation for his commitment to TCC and the Foundation.

"I just felt that I could make a difference in people's lives, especially kids, and that's just all I wanted to do," Fitzgerald said. "I believe that you can make a big difference by making them smile or taking their minds off a difficult situation. My training at TCC allowed me to do that, just as my clown activities help me to spread happiness and lessen their worries. After all, there's no point in spending life worrying because you're not going to get out of it alive anyway."

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

“

I just felt that I could make a difference in people's lives, especially kids, and that's just all I wanted to do. I believe that you can make a big difference by making them smile or taking their minds off a difficult situation.

Edward Fitzgerald
TCC Alumni





EVELYN DOYLE AND RENEE WARE EQUIP FUTURE EDUCATORS THROUGH THEIR DONATIONS

By Paul Sturiale

Evelyn Doyle and her daughter, Renee Ware, view their donations to the Tarrant County College Foundation as a family affair.

Their generosity is as much about supporting the school that gave Ware's daughter, Samantha Ware, an opportunity to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher as it is about supporting aspiring teachers in the larger Tarrant County education family. Doyle and Ware have been annual donors to the Foundation's general fund for more than a decade. They earmark their donations for students who are pursuing teaching studies, said Ware, adding that their joint donations actually create twice the benefits because Ware's employer, Lockheed Martin Corporation, generously matches their donations up to \$10,000.

After Samantha Ware graduated from Tarrant County College in 2008, she used her Associate of Arts in Teaching degree as a springboard to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art at the University of North Texas. In turn, that degree has become the foundation for a long and satisfying career in art education.

"I was looking for something worthwhile to support, and I felt that Samantha had received a good education at TCC—I strongly believe in a good education," said Ware of her and her mother's decisions to support the Foundation. "So I felt it was a worthwhile school and a good way to help students to fulfill their dreams. We're in a community where people are struggling, and to think that I can put my money where I know that it is doing some good locally

is very satisfying. I'm using it to make things better in my community, I'm not just giving it away to some general charitable fund that uses it outside of the county."

"Tarrant County College is a place where students of limited means can get a good education that gives them immediate skills and knowledge they can use in the marketplace or that prepares them to pursue higher degrees," Ware said, adding that her personal experience with TCC's faculty had as much to do with her decision to support the TCC Foundation as her general appreciation for the quality of the education and guidance that her daughter received.

"My daughter had the most amazing teachers. She really had the best English teacher under the sun. And when she had questions about her career and future, he really encouraged her to stay with it, to pursue her degree and her dream," Ware said.

Doyle and Ware agreed that one of the most gratifying aspects of their involvement with the Foundation has been their attendance at the school's banquets for graduating seniors because it humanizes their gifts. "We could meet the recipients of our donations and understand how we had helped them – the impact we had on their lives. It was nice to see our recipients and get to know them a little," Doyle said.

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

A woman with curly hair, wearing a white blazer, stands on the left side of the frame, smiling and pointing at a large digital screen. The screen displays a business presentation with a bar chart on the left and a line graph on the right. The bar chart has four bars with values 60%, 100%, 80%, and 40%. The line graph shows a red line trending upwards. The audience, consisting of several people, is seated in wooden chairs, facing the presenter. They are in a bright room with large windows and white brick walls. A potted plant is visible near the windows.

Customized Corporate & Economic Solutions.

From leadership development to process improvement to tailored learning programs, your workforce development begins here.

TCCMeansBusiness.com

TCC
MEANS
BUSINESS

Tarrant County College

