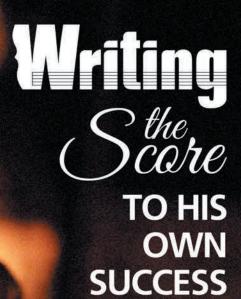


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TCC ALUM LEON BRIDGES

FALL 2021

REACH MAGAZINE

Vol. 8 • No. 2 Fall 2021

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CHANCELLOR'S CORNER

hile 2020 proved to be a jarring year for higher education, 2021 offered continued opportunities for organizational flexibility, resilience and accomplishment. In many ways, this pandemic has represented a first: never has our community needed educational agility more than it has since March 2020, and never has higher education been tested as immediately to change its hallowed processes. Having transitioned our students and staff, in a manner of days, to fully online learning and earning last year, we were poised to return to our campuses and offices as quickly as possible. As it turned out, TCC continued to offer most of its classes online through the Summer II term, though faculty and staff began returning to their offices in July.



Similar to every other community college in the nation, we knew we would face enrollment challenges for several reasons including student uncertainty about COVID risk, student challenges with online learning and economic hardships imposed by the pandemic. Accordingly, the College embarked upon an intentional outreach effort to ensure students vacillating about their Fall plans would be encouraged to enroll for the first time, or return from the prior semester, with a full range of academic, social, enrollment and financial support services in place. When the doors opened to the Fall term on August 23, our enrollment was approximately 13% lower than the same time last year; interestingly, enrollment at TCC Connect – our fully online campus – was nearly 4% higher than last. Seemingly, the digital natives who comprise Gen X are more comfortable in the online learning space than we thought, giving us more reason to evaluate the very real differences between online learning (with its associated pedagogy) and remote learning. We see this as a definite growth opportunity for the future. As an institution, we've put a premium on the value of innovation for quite some time. While it didn't take the pandemic to jolt us forward, it certainly created an urgent reason to get where our students wanted us to go: greater flexibility in where and how they learn.

With students situated in their online classes and staff adjusted to working through MS Teams, we completed two mission-critical technology platform migrations in the Spring and Summer. First, in March, TCC launched its new student portal, MyTCCTrack, where students can register and pay for classes, access and accept their financial aid, request transcripts and more. Within the Ellucian (MyTCCTrack) platform, Student Planning replaced WebAdvisor and now serves as the official and comprehensive module for students to select, schedule and register for courses. The new platform is expected to provide students more autonomy in managing their academic careers while at TCC. Employees also now use MyTCCTrack to track and manage important documents and transactions associated with their employment.

Second, for the past 10 years, TCC has used Blackboard Learn for its Learning Management System (LMS) to create, distribute and manage the delivery of education content. As more TCC instructors stepped into online instruction (prior to COVID-19), faculty leadership recommended consideration and selection of a new LMS system to replace Blackboard (upon the expiration of TCC's contract in September 2021) in favor of a platform that would better serve students' needs. The Integrated Instructional Learning Environments (IILE) advisory panel formed a team specifically dedicated to identifying functional needs in a new LMS and, from there, evaluating vendors whose platforms met the articulated goal of "supporting, enabling and facilitating 21st-century student learning outcomes." After TCC's transition to a predominantly online environment in Spring 2020, the functional criteria document was updated and, after an extensive faculty and staff review, Canvas by Instructure emerged as the recommended LMS. This technology transition represented no small feat, requiring thousands of courses and associated media to be migrated to the Canvas platform while Blackboard was still being used. The challenge was worth the benefits for students and faculty alike, including a user-friendly learning experience, more robust collaboration tools, 24/7 technical support and ease of content sharing among faculty.

You'll see more interesting stories about our impact on our students and our community, and what I hope you will recognize is that no matter the challenge, no matter the environment, no matter the uncertainty, TCC maintains its dedication to putting its students, staff and community at the heart of all we do. We thank you for your continued support and confidence in our mission.

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After being away for 16 months, students returned to in-person classes in August, ready to continue their studies and reconnect with faculty and friends.

Katie is a Sign Language Interpreting major. Students in her class practice their ASL skills together. Returning student Katie Beard, left, on her way to in-person class after many TCC classes transitioned to online learning in 2020 and part of 2021.

> Katie shows off some dance moves at the Intercultural Network open house event at TCC Trinity River.

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TCC Trinity River students with Coordinator of Intercultural Student Engagement, Dantrayl Smith, far right.

Lunch time with classmates!

Katie checks in on her laptop. TCC students have a new Learning Management System to use. Class schedules, assignments, feedback and grades are provided through the new system.

Class is over. Time for Katie's next activity.

FUTORE

But first, a quick hug! Friendships are rekindled after being apart. Time to start studying. Katie knows it's going to be a great year!

EARNING

GO TO SCHOOL WHILE HOLDING DOWN A FULL-TIME JOB? THE JUGGLE IS REAL.

By Alexis Patterson

eanna Fung first enrolled in college in 1987. Almost 30 years later, she earned her degree at Tarrant County College.

"I come from a line of blue-collar workers, and no one in my family had attended college," shares Fung. "During my first experience with college, I failed most of the only semester I was ever enrolled. I'm pretty sure it was Fs across the board since I didn't take the time to drop the classes. Shortly afterward, I got married and had a family."

All the busyness of life took over; as her children grew up, though, Fung didn't forget about her own education. She wanted to give college another go, but she believed it would be difficult — she was working full time and couldn't spend multiple days on campus every week.

"I had envisioned that it would be a five-year process because I intended to take only a class or two at a time," she says. "But then I found out about Weekend College."

TCC's Weekend College allows students to attend classes on campus or virtually just one day a week; the rest of the coursework can be completed online. That changed everything for Fung, who calls the program the "motivating factor" that finally got her back in college.

"Weekend College was compact and attainable," she says. "I sat down with an advisor and charted a workable path."

Weekend College is part of TCC Connect, which manages the College's full range of eLearning. TCC Connect programs are designed to help students accelerate their degree completion options while balancing work, family and other responsibilities. The campus offers courses in dozens of fields, with various start dates throughout each semester.

"TCC Connect is student-centric by creating schedules that meet the needs of students," notes Audra Barrett, director of Weekend College. "It offers convenience and flexibility to those who wish to determine a time and place of their own to study."

That approach is extremely valuable, with so many TCC students trying to achieve their educational goals while managing competing obligations. Based on estimates from the 2019 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) survey, 37 percent of TCC students work more than 30 hours a week, and 17 percent spent more than 30 hours a week caring for their family. For them, a non-traditional approach to college is often the key to success.

Thank Goodness It's Friday (and Saturday)

Weekend College students attend their courses at set times either at TCC Trinity River in downtown Fort Worth or virtually; classes meet on Friday evenings or Saturday mornings and early afternoons. The program makes it possible for students to finish their associate degree in 18 months or fewer.

The options provide each student flexibility, balance and the opportunity to learn in the way that's best for them: fully online from the convenience of home or any other location, or with an on-campus experience. Fung enjoyed being on campus (she was an officer in Phi Theta Kappa honor society and participated in TCC service projects) but also greatly benefited from the online aspects of the program. "I could replay, reread or rehear content if I didn't grasp the concept the first time around," says Fung. "If you're not a good notetaker, or your comprehension — like mine — is diminished from being tired from the workday, a student could easily be overwhelmed. Online delivery gives some wiggle room for self-paced study, and the online classroom is open around the clock."

Through Weekend College, students can earn an Associate of Arts, or complete core courses and other classes that will go toward an Associate of Science or an accounting clerk certification. "The focus is always on helping students complete the educational goals they have set, whatever they may be," says Barrett.

Fung earned her Associate of Arts, with honors, as a member of Weekend College's first graduating class in 2016. Over the years, Weekend College has experienced significant growth. It began with just over 100 students in fall 2014; a total of 5,892 students have now taken advantage of the program, with a retention rate of 89.9 percent.

Barrett expects enrollment and success rates to continue to grow as Weekend College adds new courses, certifications and options. To guide these expansion decisions, administrators like Barrett monitor economic and demographic data. In addition, Weekend College is working toward establishing even more flexible programs in which students can transition seamlessly between online and on-campus learning within a single course. There also are plans to develop learning communities that will enhance peer support. "Our goal is to meet student and business needs to supply the community with certifications and programs that allow students to earn a livable wage," says Barrett.

College did more than provide professional security and growth for Fung, who maintained her position in Tarrant County Juvenile Services throughout her studies. "Weekend College opened the doors to the world of higher education, how the world works and where I fit in," she reflects. With her associate degree in hand, Fung plans to continue to advance in her career and earn a bachelor's degree.

Virtual Learning, Real Success

While some may think of eLearning as a relatively new development that came along with high-speed internet and more affordable computers, TCC has been providing learning at a distance since 1973. That fall, the College offered two courses via instructional television, with almost 800 students enrolling. By 1989, the earliest iterations of online courses began. Today, TCC has one of the largest eLearning programs in the state. As the pandemic increased the need for and interest in remote opportunities, eLearning enrollment has continued to flourish.

TCC's online offerings extend beyond Weekend College. In fact, students can enroll in Weekend College at the same time as other virtual classes to put their completion on an even faster track. Unlike the virtual courses in Weekend College — which have live meetings on Fridays or Saturdays — true online courses at TCC are asynchronous, which means they don't have any set times for live meetings.

"Asynchronous courses allow students to complete work by deadlines on their own schedule versus having to attend class-specific dates and times," explains Cristina Sullivan, dean of Academic Operations for TCC Connect. "We plan on offering more fully online sections in the future."

TCC eLearning currently includes more than 170 college credit courses (plus a variety of Continuing Education courses for personal development and professional enrichment). While students may be learning remotely, there is a focus on their inclusion in the overall TCC community and a strong commitment to their success. "TCC Connect offers student services online," Sullivan says. "Academic advising, success coaches, transfer services – all of this can be conveniently completed online so students do not need to come to campus. We are available if students need to meet face-to-face, but all in all we want to take the stress out of earning a credential or degree."

Serving All Students

Of course, TCC strives to make it more convenient to earn a certificate or degree in all forms of learning – even traditional, on-campus classes, according to Shannon Ydoyaga, vice president of Academic Affairs for TCC South. That campus offers career training in areas including heating and air conditioning, construction, welding and automotive, in addition to core classes in math, science, humanities and so on.

"With these types of programs, it is essential to provide courses in the evening as well as on the weekends so we can support students needing to work and attend college," says Ydoyaga. "Our comprehensive schedule is designed to serve all of our students."

That means all students can reach their goals faster. Fung crossed the stage at graduation just 18 months after beginning Weekend College. The benefits, however, will last much longer than she imagined.

"I did not know it when I was in school, but the dialogue of college has been ingrained in my kids and their small children," Fung says. "They have seen the success of my education as I have lived it. They, too, can continue their education."

For more information on TCC Connect programs, call 817-515-8000 or visit tccd.edu/locations/tccconnect-campus.

OVER THE YEARS, WEEKEND COLLEGE HAS EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT GROWTH. IT BEGAN WITH JUST OVER 100 STUDENTS IN FALL 2014; A TOTAL OF 5,892 STUDENTS HAVE NOW TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE PROGRAM, WITH A RETENTION RATE OF 89.9 PERCENT.

GETTING A 21ST-CENTURY FACELIFT

FACILITY UPDATES AND IMPROVEMENTS ARE UNDERWAY AT TCC THANKS TO THE BOND PROGRAM APPROVED BY VOTERS

College

Nelcome to

Northwest

Campus

Creating 21st Century Learning

Spaces for you

By Bill Lace

nyone seeking concrete (pun intended) results from TCC's \$825 million bond program approved by Tarrant County voters in November 2019 need look no further than TCC Northwest.

The administrative wing is gone, and most of the remainder of the original campus core will soon follow. In its place is a beehive of construction on the first two of four new buildings that will contain most campus offices. Only the newer academic building, the gymnasium and the maintenance building remain, and they will be "reskinned" — that is, given an exterior facelift to match the new construction. The Police Academy and Fire Service Training Center will be unaffected.

The budget for what's being called a "redevelopment" is \$320 million, with completion expected near the end of the fall 2025 semester.

Just as spectacular, though not currently as visible, will be a similar project at TCC Southeast. Unlike Northwest, there will be no wholesale demolition, but two new structures — a Student Experience Building and an Academic Building – will book end and fundamentally alter the look and character of the campus. The Student Experience Building will serve as a "front door," and will be a one-stop shop where students will find key services such as testing, counseling and registrar's office surrounding a large, common waiting area dotted with computer terminals.

The Academic Building will house mostly classrooms, labs and faculty workspaces, although an area on the first level is noteworthy as the home of the Culinary Arts Program complete with a catering kitchen, teaching kitchen, bake shop









and – of course – a dining room.

There are additional renovations to the current Academic Wing and the Library, which has morphed into a two-level Learning Commons containing not only books, but also a speech/language lab, writing center and a "sandbox" for experimental technology. The \$125 million project is expected to be completed by November 2024.

These are marquee projects, but much is happening and planned on other campuses – new, "21st century" classrooms on Northwest, Northeast and South; new welding labs at South and at the Center of Excellence for Aviation, Transportation and Logistics at Alliance Airport; renovation of the Electronics Building at South and theater upgrades at Northeast, South and Southeast.

Then there are the behind-the-curtain projects – emergency power upgrades, chiller replacement, cooling towers, electrical distribution system upgrades, sanitary sewer rehabilitation, fire sprinkler upgrades, exterior lighting upgrades, transformer replacements, roof repairs and dozens of other items that seldom occur to people except when they don't operate.

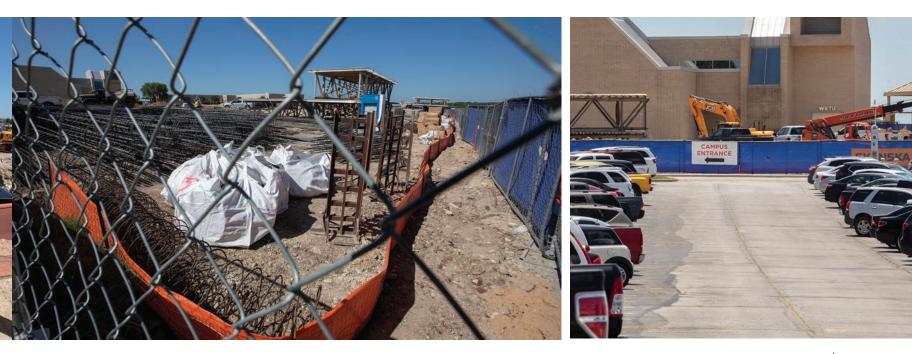
The bond program pie is divided into four pieces. The

Northwest redevelopment has the largest at 38.23 percent. The Mechanical-Electrical-Plumbing Infrastructure slice is 24.13 percent, followed closely by the 3G8P (strategic initiatives) category at 22.70 percent. Rounding out the pie is the Southeast redevelopment at 14.93 percent.

The 3G8P bucket consists of projects directly related to teaching and learning facilities and that have been derived from and guided by recommendation of faculty/staff committees that have researched various aspects of the Colleges eight undergirding principles. For instance, classroom modifications and upgrades stem from the work of the Integrated Instructional Learning Environments (ILLE) Principle Committee.

TCC's bond project has a long way to go, as is evident in the latest monthly report that says expenditures to date are \$83.7 million, but the work of the Principle Committees will continue indefinitely. Their task is to search for ways to make the College better, and there's always room for that.

To follow TCC's bond-funded project status, visit: www.tccd.edu/bond





AMY JENNINGS DRAWS FROM HER MOTHER'S EXPERIENCE WITH DEMENTIA TO CREATE A DANCE PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTS AT A LOCAL MEMORY CARE FACILITY

my Jennings, associate professor of dance at TCC Northwest, enters the room to find her class already seated. A few look up in expectation. Others look straight ahead or down at the floor.

She opens with soft music, encouraging her dancers to breathe deeply — from their core and to raise their arms and look upward. Some follow her lead, but most do not. Participation might increase, or it might not. Jennings isn't too surprised or concerned, for these are not her TCC students but residents of the James L. West Center for Dementia Care in Fort Worth.

Jennings began researching dance as dementia therapy seven years ago and has reached the point where she's written up a case study to be published in the *National Dance Society Journal* in December. Her interest, however, is just as much personal as professional. The subject of the study is her mother, Andrea, who was diagnosed in 2014 with temporal lobe dementia, a condition much like Alzheimer's and with the same outcome.

Three years later she choreographed "The Beauty of Dementia," an ensemble work for her TCC dancers that she describes as "a focus of the walk and journey with my mom and dementia." Narrating a mixed-media presentation with the same title, she speaks of having seen changes in her mother — behavior, forgetfulness, directions and anxiety. "This was really the beginning of my work to begin to launch into this new world of a person living with dementia, and it was my mom, at age 70," she said.

By Bill Lace

The 17-minute dance program featured a solo, "Transmitting Messages," by student Holly Tate, who remembered that it wasn't until the first rehearsal that she knew what it all was about. "She gave me a little bit of information about how her mother had dementia and this process she'd been going through trying to figure it all out," she said. "So, we took those little details and expanded them into movement that could be appreciated on an audience level. For me, it was a super intimate piece and it was the most amazing experience to go through that process. It was really extraordinary."

While Jennings is not a licensed movement therapist with the required graduate study, she has read and attended workshops on dementia and earned her certification as a dementia caregiver through the West Center.

Her research centers on how music brings a rhythm to the body that can, in turn, bring about memories and unlock stories. "Really, the walk with my mom was as kind of a test subject," she said. "How do I, with all I've learned and researched, engage the things I know about her where she is? Every person with dementia will struggle a little bit differently. So, I have these little vignettes of my mom and what has been and still is to walk through."

Love, like labor, is an action word, and so is forgiveness. The three all work together to bear good fruit. Every person living with dementia is having trouble, and the soul can be damaged. So, we all labor together to cultivate the soul and the spirit.

Amy Jennings, Associate Professor of Dance TCC Northwest Jennings' walk with her mother has been one of discovery. "There are stories I never knew," she said. "Then there are stories you know are not true because she's in this dream world trying to pull things out that are a little bit true."

She's discovered, she says, that her mother "is finding the poetry of all God has created. Words and meanings deeper than I could have ever imagined, like 'clouds without rain' and 'the whole top of the world turned blue."

Jennings cannot be her mother's day-to-day caregiver. That's the job of her father and the professionals in a personal care facility in western Pennsylvania. She does, however, have surrogates dozens of them at the West Center. When she's home, she sees people taking care of her mother. "And then I come here, and I'm with West Center residents and the community of Fort Worth, she said. "And everybody's still finding a way to take care of others."

It's not an easy task. She has to approach the residents' world instead of having them come into hers. "It's frustrating because you have something you're really wanting to offer and you know there will be a part of it that some days they're not going to do," she said. "Sometimes it's about just living in that moment when the two worlds are working simultaneously."

It's also frustrating to the teacher in Jennings that her "lessons" don't build on one another, week after week, as with TCC students. Dementia patients may remember last week only very dimly, or not at all. "You have to let go of some of your teaching expectations and just be in the moment of approaching them where they are that day," Jennings said.

But then there are the rewards, not just the pleasure of having been of comfort, but the made-myday sparks when she makes a connection, however brief. "It's the moment where their eyes light up," she said, "and you see this joy, or this reaction come out of their eyes."

And, sometimes, it's not just the eyes. Joy can come out in dance, when the body comes out of its shell, or in song, such as the time she put on a Temptations oldie and a burly, bearded guy in a military vet cap belted out the refrain to "My Girl."

Jennings' work is a labor of love. "Love, like labor, is an action word, and so is forgiveness," she said. "The three all work together to bear good fruit. Every person living with dementia is having trouble, and the soul can be damaged. So, we all labor together to cultivate the soul and the spirit."

She loves her dancers and the staff at the West Center, and they love her right back. "Her passion is contagious," said Jamie Cobb, vice president of dementia and caregiver education. "She leaves our residents feeling better about themselves overall, and that sticks with them.

"She has the same effect on the staff members. There's that focused attention on the residents engaged in that activity that they weren't getting before she was here."

Jennings hopes her passion is contagious throughout the College, as well. She has been working with the Continuing Education staff at TCC Northwest on what she calls the Beloved Ballet Project, the goal of which is to have Active Aging Ballet and Dance for Dementia classes not only on Northwest, but on every TCC campus. The project, as with much else, has been in neutral during the pandemic, but she plans to jump start it with a seniors' ballet class this fall.

It's another part of her labor of love. "I'm reminded as we adjust back to campus, plates have been full for everyone," she said, "so the labor of love has been like setting a table for dinner, then waiting with patience as all the guests arrive."

She also plans to increase her outreach beyond TCC and to, with her student volunteers, put on classes for the West Center and for the Alzheimer's Association of North Central Texas.

Jennings knows that her walk — her earthly walk — with her mother will end. "It's hard," she said. "It's hard to watch your mom, who's been so active all these years and to know that, eventually, something will come."

Meanwhile, she's grateful for all that has been and still will be, and she expresses that gratitude on the final slide of her media presentation. It shows two pair of feet lounging on a stone ledge overlooking a peaceful lawn. Under is a letter of thanksgiving to her mom — for inspiring her to dance, for letting her dance in the garage with the music turned up, for letting her try on an adult tutu and, finally ...

"...for always welcoming me home and dancing with you in the moments where memory fades, but dance and music bring us back together. Love, Amy"

For more information on dance at TCC, please visit:www.tccd.edu/dance

BRIDGING WHAT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE

FOUR YEARS AGO, 59-YEAR-OLD GREGORY BURNETT WAS LIVING IN HIS CAR UNDER A BRIDGE NEAR INTERSTATE 35. WHEN HE TRIED TO STARVE HIMSELF TO DEATH, A GOOD SAMARITAN SAW HIS VEHICLE AND CALLED 911 FOR HELP. AFTER BEING SAVED, HE DECIDED TO MAKE SOME CHANGES.



VISIONS UNLIMITED OPENS DOORS TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

By Reginald Lewis

The Visions Unlimited program at Tarrant County College completely changed my life."

That's what Gregory Burnette wants people to know about the transformative program at TCC South. Four years ago, the 59-year-old was living in his car under a bridge near Interstate 35. When he tried to starve himself to death, a Good Samaritan saw his vehicle and called 911 for help. After being saved, Burnette decided to make some changes.

That's when he moved to a Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County shelter, which is where he learned about Visions Unlimited — a program at TCC South that works with local homeless shelters to help men and women transition to self-sufficiency and higher education.

"The program is a great idea to help the homeless population become members of society again," said Burnette. After learning more about how TCC could increase his economic mobility, he decided to enroll in the Visions Unlimited program during the fall 2018 semester.

"The Visions Unlimited program gave me the opportunity to get back into college and it prepared me for how to manage my future career," said Burnette. He benefited from two psychology classes that anchored the program, both of which are designed to provide students critical help during their time at TCC. The first class allows students to examine their personal development and learn more about themselves. In the second class, students focus on career pathways and long-term goals.

The avid reader was a strong student at TCC, finishing with a 3.6 GPA and earning an associate degree in May 2021. Despite his strong GPA, Burnette's experience at TCC was upended when the community college had to shift to remote learning in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

"TCC professors were very patient and helpful during the transition to online classes," he said. "They were prompt in responding to my questions and adjusted to the new style of teaching due to the pandemic."

When COVID-19 hit, Burnette was living at the New Life Center, a men's residential facility managed by Cornerstone Assistance Network, a faith-based organization in Fort Worth. The facility houses several men dealing with housing insecurity, some of whom have graduated from TCC. Over the past three years, five residents have graduated from TCC, with two earning graduate degrees.

After a 30-year career at IBM, the former senior printer technician was ready for a new career and TCC was going to help him get there, according to Burnette. The sudden change to remote learning presented a new challenge, however. Burnette, along with other housemates enrolled in the Vision Unlimited program, had to deal with limited internet access at New Life Center, which almost derailed his dream of earning an associate degree. Thankfully, he was able to connect with supportive professors and staff members at every turn.

Without the support of Tina Jenkins, professor of psychology and coordinator of the Visions Unlimited program at TCC South, and Jolynn Sprole, director of financial aid at TCC South, Burnette is not sure he would have finished his degree at TCC or been prepared to successfully complete his four-year degree at Texas Wesleyan University.

"Dr. Jenkins monitored my progress to ensure I had everything I needed to succeed at TCC," he explained. "Ms. Sprole guided me through the FAFSA process to make sure I had enough financial aid to continue at Texas Wesleyan. She also called the finance director at Texas Wesleyan to get them to honor a previous agreement for TCC students transferring into the university, which allowed me to be able to afford Texas Wesleyan with the scholarship."

After Burnette graduates from Texas Wesleyan with a degree in psychology, he hopes to give back to the community by helping people who are going through what he's been able to overcome.

"God will put me where I can serve him best," he shared.

TCC continues to be committed to serving every student who walks through its doors, regardless of income status.

Since 2007, hundreds of students dealing with homelessness have participated in the Visions Unlimited program. As program coordinator, Jenkins gets the opportunity to watch the Visions Unlimited students experience growth and achieve different levels of success.

"Of course, we love to see high GPAs, but we have seen students reunite with their loved ones, obtain employment and build self-esteem, selfconfidence and communication skills," said Jenkins. "They've already been able to improve their mental and physical health, plus obtain housing and financial stability." Texas of Arlington. She's currently working fulltime at a MHMR (My Health My Resources) of Tarrant County location. Before joining MHMR, Zipper worked part-time at TCC, helping students as an academic advisor.

"There is no greater intrinsic reward than when we see our Visions Unlimited students graduate," said Jenkins. "To play a small part in transformational learning and permanent positive change in the lives of our students is truly a blessing."

Since its inception, the Visions Unlimited program has worked with internal and external



Over the past 18 months or so, nearly 10 Visions Unlimited students have earned an associate degree or certificate from TCC. What really makes Jenkins proud is hearing news about TCC alumni going on to earn graduate degrees in various disciplines.

One alumnae, John Smith '16, earned a Master of Science in Geographic Information Science and Technology from the University of Southern California in 2020. The self-proclaimed "data nerd" performed so well academically that his graduate advisor provided a recommendation for a doctoral program at MIT.

After graduating from TCC, Heather Zipper went on to earn her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from the University of partners to help this vulnerable population, which was what former Chancellor Erma Hadley desired for the program.

"I'm sure the late Mrs. Hadley is smiling," said Jenkins. "She always said we must never forget about the students that need us the most. Today, we are very fortunate to have the support of Chancellor Eugene Giovannini. His empathy, compassion and steadfast studentcentered leadership sets an exemplary community stewardship standard for TCC employees."

In addition to the support from Chancellor Giovannini and the rest of the TCC community, the Visions Unlimited program enjoys strong partnerships with various community organizations and corporations throughout the region. "Our community and corporate partners play integral roles with filling in gaps of unmet needs," Jenkins explained. "We rely heavily on community partners such as Cornerstone Assistance Network, Union Gospel Mission, Salvation Army, Presbyterian Night Shelter and True Worth Place. We have partnered with faith-based entities such as St. Paul United Methodist Church and have received annual donations for more than 10 years from them. Additionally, we have received past grants from First Presbyterian Church and MHMR."

The partnership between Cornerstone Assistance Network and TCC has grown in individual contributions to the Visions Unlimited Scholarship, all the financial and community resources help to address critical student needs such as tuition and school supplies.

"I can truly say this type of support has kept the program going," explained Jenkins. "While we have wisely utilized the funding over the last few years, additional financial resources are needed to help the program to thrive and meet emerging needs. TCC certainly does not want the program to shrink under the pressure of limited financial resources."

Alumnae Kevin Brooks '20 was awarded the Visions Unlimited Scholarship, which provided full

There is no greater intrinsic reward than when we see our Visions Unlimited students graduate," said Jenkins. "To play a small part in transformational learning and permanent positive change in the lives of our students is truly a blessing.

Tina Jenkins, Professor of Psychology and Coordinator of the Visions Unlimited program at TCC South

recent years. Philip Posey, director of housing for Cornerstone Assistance Network, believes the alliance will play an important role in more residents achieving their academic goals.

"Until four years ago, I had other case managers running the program that didn't have the vision for this program that I had," Posey shared. "I began to establish a relationship with Dr. Jenkins, who has the same passion for these men that I do. I also began to connect with Union Gospel Mission. With these three programs coordinating our efforts, we have created a pathway of success for homeless men who have a desire to succeed."

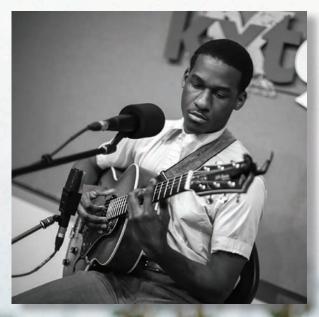
A generous corporate donation from Amerigroup has greatly enhanced TCC South's programmatic offerings over the last few years. By adding in the tuition for one academic year to a student who had accomplished academic and personal milestones. Brooks earned an associate degree in cybersecurity from TCC and transferred to Tarleton State University. Ultimately, Brooks would like to earn his master's degree in cybersecurity and then start teaching at the college level.

For an individual or organization interested in supporting the Visions Unlimited Program or scholarship, contact dorothy.jenkins@tccd.edu for more information on how to contribute.

To learn more about the empowering work being done by TCC's Visions Unlimited program, visit www.tccd.edu/VisionsUnlimited **LEON BRIDGES** REFLECTS ON HIS TIME AT TCC AND ITS IMPACT ON HIS MUSICAL CAREER

Writing the Score for His Future

Photos by Pavielle Garcia and Justin Hardman



t's no secret that Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Leon Bridges loves to rep Fort Worth. Whether during a media interview or for a backdrop in a music video, Leon Bridges is not ashamed to share Fort Worth's beauty with the rest of the world.

In 2015, Leon hit the ground running with his first album, "Coming Home," which debuted at #1 on Billboard's Top R&B/Hip Hop chart and secured the soulful singer a Grammy nomination in the Best R&B Album category. Yet, he didn't go to New York City or Los Angeles to launch his career. An ode to the tradition of Texas soul, "Coming Home" was birthed at a studio right here in Fort Worth. After a second Grammy nomination in 2016, the Tarrant County College alumnus ultimately took home the award for Best Traditional R&B Performance for his track "Bet Ain't Worth the Hand" during the 2019 Grammy Awards.

Often compared to Otis Redding and Sam Cooke, the young star has moved from a vintage sound reminiscent of the 60s to one that forces the listener to dig for deeper emotions. The move seems, in fact, to be paying off in big ways.

When *REACH Magazine* caught up with Leon Bridges, he was in New York to perform on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* and *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. Reggie Lewis asked him about his time at Tarrant County College, his evolution as an artist and why his music is a vessel for change.

First off. I just wanted to thank you for taking the time to speak with me. I recently had an opportunity to listen to your new LP, Gold Diggers Sound, and it is filled with really some rich sounds. Also, the lyrics really touched me. It's a great piece of work.

Thank you, man. I appreciate that.

Absolutely. What brought you to TCC?

It was just the thing to do. There's the nickname of TCC being the 13th grade, right after high school. You're pretty much going to see the same people from high school. And I was kind of doing my thing, and my mother just kind of encouraged me to start taking some classes. I guess, initially, the plan was to get my associate degree, and it just wasn't for me. One thing that I did gravitate to during that time was dance. At some point I got involved in the dance company, Velocity, and pretty much did that for my whole time there.

And which campus was Velocity on? Is that the South campus?

Yeah, that's the South campus.

Okay. And so, I'm glad you brought that up. That's a nice segue to my next question. You had an interest in dance, so talk about some of those memorable experiences that you had as a member of Velocity.

Man, I mean, it was a lit time. Because the thing was, I was always interested in dance. I was always kind of fundamentally a hip hop dancer. And when I got to campus, there was this group of dudes. They were from the hood, but they were taking ballet and all that kind of stuff. And it totally, like, inspired me to kind of go down that path. And the beautiful thing about it is I really met some, through that time, some long-term and really solid friendships kind of transpired from that.

And so yeah, we would just learn certain choreography pieces. I would choreograph stuff, and in my downtime, we would get together in the cafeteria, and there was this guy who would bring a keyboard to school every day. And a lot of people would just kind of congregate around him, and just like have these freestyle jam sessions. And all of that prepared me and shaped me for what I'm doing now.



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That's interesting. So how did the opportunity to take dance and grow within that particular major influence your stage performance?

Ah man, it's been so crucial, as far as just having that kind of extra thing as a performer. And it totally taught me how to move and dance while I'm performing. Like when I'm doing photo shoots, as a dancer I can get into some poses that just really make the photo. And it also just instilled this confidence of being on the stage. And I've always, my whole life, been this bashful, quiet kid. And I was able to just break through my fear of being in front of people through being at TCC.

That's awesome. Were there any specific dance instructors or professors that really had an impact on your life?

Absolutely. Gypsy Ingram, she was my teacher during that time. She really helped me break out of my shell and essentially find my voice. When I was studying ballet and modern dance, I had a hard time just grasping some of the vocabulary. And she took us to see Dallas Black Dance Theatre.

Went to see them, and it totally just unlocked something for me. Just seeing Black men do this kind of contemporary style dance, and it could be hella dope, hella masculine. And that totally just ignited a fire in me, seeing that. There's Gypsy, and I had a couple of dance mates as well. My homeboy Kenny Busby and Mina Calvin. And fast forward, we always had these aspirations to be cast in a music video. And I think the beautiful thing is now that I have my platform, I can include them in my videos, which is like crazy.

That's beautiful. Overall, how did your time at TCC impact your evolution as an artist and as a person?

Man. Yeah, I would say just the circle that I was in, the music circle that I was in. From that, it inspired me to pick up a guitar. It inspired me to be a songwriter. And I think at the same time, it was really helpful having this community of people who gave me this constant affirmation of "Yeah, you're actually dope." And if it wasn't for that, then I don't think I would have had the confidence to keep going. So, I would say in that way, it shaped me.

That's deep. So, if you could travel back in time, Leon, and give your younger self some advice about college, what would you say?

Man. I would say, treat your studies like a job. And I think me, number one, if I didn't leave TCC that I wouldn't have had success as a musician. But there's parts of me, I wish I stayed, because I have weak points of the music world. I work hard, but there's moments where I don't know if I had the structure of school and having to study and do all this [stuff], I think it would've just better prepared me to be more focused on certain little projects and things that I do now. But yeah, I would probably just tell myself to treat it like a job. Yeah, that's all I got.

No, that was good. So, let's pivot toward your musical career. That's a good segue. How did your journey with music start now? You mentioned the keyboardist on South campus. Was that the beginning? And if so, just kind of walk me through your progression.

For sure. So, I've always loved to sing. Music is a universal language, and everybody at some point loves to sing along to their favorite music. And so that was kind of me. And when I got to TCC, you know, I met the keyboardist Octavian, but also met other people on campus. And at that time, I was pretty immersed within the church and Christianity. So, I was like walking that path, and I remember initially in my head I was thinking there isn't a lot of good modern gospel music. So, let me set out to write tasteful gospel music. And my song "River" transpired from that, and other songs that made it on my first album.

And so ultimately, I had to leave TCC to pick up another job to help support my mother. And so, I still had the need to express myself, because my platform, from dancing onstage, I kind of had to transition from that to finding open mics. So, in my downtime I would work on my guitar playing, write songs and pull up on open mics around DFW. And there was this one particular place called Magnolia Motor Lounge that I would show up to and play a couple of songs like every Tuesday. And one of those nights this guy happens to come through by the name of Austin Jenkins. He noticed, apparently that night, my playing and the songs resonated with him. And he approached me after my set and was complimenting the songs, and he mentioned that he wanted to set up this makeshift studio and record a song. And so, after that, we put the music on SoundCloud and it totally just snowballed from there.

Certainly, the way music is done now, and the way artists are able to create their own buzz, you have more control now. It's different than in years past. Let me ask you, who were some of your biggest influences?

Man, it's funny because so much happened during that time at TCC. My good friend Deon Thompson. I remember when I kind of first embarked on this path, I reached out to him. I was like, "Yo, can you put me on to like some progressive R&B artists?" And he wrote this list of some musicians. And on

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I feel like I have somewhat of a job of carrying the torch. Because I think traditional Black music is dying within the Black community. And I think that there's a bit of a disconnect there. And nothing negative about it. It's just our culture, in the stuff that we gravitate towards, it continues to evolve.

Leon Bridges

that list, it was Frank Ocean, it was Miguel. And I discovered those people through him. And so, I think what was really empowering was specifically Miguel and seeing him play guitar and seeing that he was a songwriter as well. And so, I really looked up to Miguel.

And then fast forward, through the open mics, I'm meeting people who have a different taste in music, and it's not in the R&B realm. People who were putting me on to The Beatles and Rolling Stones and Van Morrison. And so, one thing I've always loved is the marriage of soul music and country and folk and R&B. And so, I really try to incorporate all those nuances in music. Because I think that there's nothing new under the sun, but I think when you incorporate those elements within the R&B context, it really makes for interesting and refreshing sounds.

What is it about music that makes you feel passionate?

I feel like I have somewhat of a job of carrying the torch. Because I think traditional Black music is dying within the Black community. And I think that there's a bit of a disconnect there. And nothing negative about it. It's just our culture, in the stuff that we gravitate towards, it continues to evolve. And so, for me, I wanted in some way to just kind of be that gateway of sticking to more traditional R&B but also pushing it forward. It's important to push soul music forward. My first album was a derivative of the '60s style of R&B, and I wanted to evolve and put that forward. And I think it's resonating with people.

That it is. Yes, it is. Now Leon, let's talk about your new LP, "Gold-Diggers Sound." The song "Sweeter" really touched my soul as a dark skin brother, especially during today's iteration of social unrest. What was the inspiration for the song?

For sure. Throughout my career, I've always tried to write a song that really spoke to that. And for me, I had a hard time because number one, I'm a perfectionist and I just couldn't find the right words. And in that moment doing "Gold-Diggers Sound," it was the day that first day that Terrace Martin (musician) pulled up. Terrace Martin started playing these chords, and then like the rest of the band just started kind of playing a vibe. And I immediately knew what the song should be about. And the words came to me in that moment.

And this was prior to the George Floyd moment that kind of woke up the world, which is a reflection of Black men. You know, the perpetual narrative of Black men dying in the hands of police. And artists that I look up to historically have always spoken to the time, and that's just what it was for me. And I wrote that song in the hopes of it being a beacon of light and uplifting for the Black community during that time.

It's timeless. Certainly, you'll be able to listen to that for many years to come on. As far as the visual piece, the video, what was it like making the video for "Sweeter"? When I first started watching the video, I said, 'Whoa, this is very powerful.' Just the imagery, the timing of everything. It was beautiful. It almost felt like I was suspended in space. Talk about that, what was it like making that video?

Thank you, man. Honestly, it's one of the dopest videos I've ever made. And I had the opportunity to kind of spearhead the situation. Number one, it was at the height of the pandemic, and I had to move fast on a visual. And I had the idea of, wait, okay, what if I bring it all back to the community? The neighborhood that I grew up in, south side of Fort Worth. I had one of my homeboys facilitate getting some of the Gs from the hood to come be a part of it. And literally, we were able to shoot on the street where I grew up as a kid.

And so, there are people who asked, "Why didn't you have women in this?" And there were a few women, but number one, height of the pandemic. But also, considering Black men being the epicenter of all this, it just made sense to really convey this unity. So, it was beautiful. There were Crip vets who normally have animosity towards each other, but they came together for this and were able to be a part of the video. And I'm blessed that they were down for that, because I think it was really a powerful message and visual.

I agree, brother. I agree. What advice would you give current TCC students about achieving success in music or any other field?

I think the thing is to just be cognizant of what's happening within the music realm, and just carving out your own lane. I think also it's important to just soak up all the great art, and I think doing that can really help shape the music and make it... I don't know, I'm probably butchering that, but yeah, I think the most important thing is stay persistent with it and surround yourself with other talented people.

Let me ask you one more question, Leon. If you had to give some advice to your son about achieving success, what would that be?

Oh man. I think it's important to perfect your craft, whatever that is, and humility is key. Damn, I think that's all I got. Thank you, man. It was good talking to you.

Same here. Pleasure's all mine.



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MINDING THEIR BUSINESS

TCC

TCC'S FIRST ENTREPRENEURIAL COHORT PUTS DREAMS INTO MOTION

By Liz Willding

hoosing to start a business can be a daunting challenge, especially for those going it alone. Having start-up funding, plus solid business training and mentors to call on for guidance, can help new entrepreneurs overcome potential pitfalls on the road to achieving their dreams. Such is the role of the Everyday Entrepreneur Venture Fund (EEVF), with TCC sponsoring its first cohort of nine entrepreneurs in the Spring of 2021.

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TCC was named as an EEVF participant by the National Association for Community Entrepreneurs (NACCE), which provides seed grants to community college foundations for community-based new business startups. The initiative is expected to grow through additional community sponsorships, with customized business training provided through TCC educators and business advisors coming from the Tarrant Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Unlike grants and other programs, the initiative provides ongoing oversight and support, helping to formalize measurable goals and provide accountability throughout the entrepreneur's journey. According to Lourdes Ramboa, chair, business & entrepreneurship programs at TCC, the program offers entrepreneurs with little or no formal business training "a great opportunity to learn."

How is it going for the initial cohort? Participants talked to *REACH Magazine* about why they launched their businesses and how TCC is helping them build toward success.

Finding their "Personal Why"

Most entrepreneurs have a "personal why" for wanting to start their own business. For **Justin McLaughlin**, owner of Xenia Roastery, LLC, launching a coffee roasting company was in large part about bringing more diversity to the industry. A first-generation business owner, he explained "there are not a lot of folks that look like me in this industry. I hope to serve as motivation for other young, aspiring entrepreneurs [who are people of color]."

Coffee also created a calling for **Charleta Sharp**, owner of Cup o' Vibes. Equally motivated by diversity, her dream is to launch a coffee shop that serves as a community gathering place in South Arlington, which she describes as "a specialty coffee shop desert." During frequent visits to a favorite coffee shop in Fort Worth, she saw community leaders, students, neighbors and business executives all gathered in the same space. "I love the way that small business became a community advocate for local initiatives," she explained.

For others like **Ana Ambriz**, who launched AMP Materials LLC, it's all about work-life balance and creating more financial security for her family. "Starting this business has given me a new sense of self," Ambriz explained. The same can be said for **Philip Viola**, who started Nor-Tex Drone Services in hopes of creating additional revenue following retirement. "I was tired of working part-time for other people

WORDS OF WISDOM

As the inaugural entrepreneur cohort for TCC, participants have words of wisdom for others who choose to take the leap and start their own business:

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Do not think twice. Start your own entrepreneurial venture. NEVER DOUBT YOURSELF or your dream. Nothing big comes easy, but the feeling of accomplishment and building something that is yours is the most rewarding thing I personally think people can do. Don't think that you don't need the support systems that are out there. Use all the sources that TCC provides. Don't be afraid to be alone because you are not. You will find joy in the end result.

Ana Ambriz, AMP Materials

MEET THE ENTREPRENEURS

The initial cohort of participants are as diverse as their startup businesses, including eight minorities or people of color and seven women-owned businesses. The first of two cohorts per year, participants include:



JUSTIN MCLAUGHLIN Xenia Roastery — a specialty coffee roastery featuring fresh beans sold through a subscription service and to local retailers.

or companies," explained Viola, a firefighter who has supplemented his income over the course of his career with side jobs.

"Finding her true passion drives **Timesha Brown**, who explained that she "feels at peace and full of joy when designing and creating events," prompting her to launch TK Events Rentals. **Arlene Peterson** of Arlene Speaks also "finds joy working with go-getters and those who choose to listen to instruction," as part of her consulting business. She thrives on helping job seekers bridge the gap between the expectations of what hiring managers ask for and what candidates believe they can and can't bring to the table.

Addressing health care issues motivates **LaKeitha Van Zandt Muckelroy**, **RN**, of Caring Hands Adult Day Center, and **Brent Bousquet** of In Good Hands, LLS, a health, fire and safety training and equipment business. Said Van Zandt Muckelroy, "I experienced the loss of both my paternal and maternal grandmothers to Alzheimer's and dementia, and I witnessed 'caregiver stress' on our family due to not having outside forms of respite." Bousquet said he "saw a need for experienced and professional training, service and support regarding medical emergencies, fire emergencies and safety precautions within the public and private sectors." Promoting emotional and mental health fuels **Carlos Walker** of Akachi Ranch, a therapeutic campsite for North Texas. He explained that the idea is to create "a peaceful, safe space where people can escape technology and reflect on their larger purpose."

Stages of the Journey

Each of the entrepreneurs is in a different stage of their journey, with all still working a day job to make ends meet. **McLaughlin** recently celebrated his first year in business, having launched Xenia Roastery in July of 2020, during the thick of the pandemic. He said his biggest hurdle is lack of exposure and opportunity. As an emerging small business, "I constantly have to prove that I have the skills and abilities as a roaster [to make the grade]," he explained. Currently, he is focused on creating direct trade relationships with coffee farmers and growing the business-tobusiness side of his company.

Ambriz launched her business in April of 2020, starting her business plan in January as COVID-19 was beginning to make the news. Her business also was impacted by a declining economy and changes in how companies did business due to the pandemic. "I continued my plans, but I had to stay conservative, and my marketing plan fell back," she explained,

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Stay prayed up and remain faithful, trusting that if He brought you to it, He'll take you through it. Believe in whatever it is you want to do. Find a mentor in your field of interest. Make a habit of listening to motivational speakers to keep you encouraged. Know that there are dream killers out there so understand you can't tell everybody what your plans are. If you expect people to invest in your business, invest in yourself. It will increase your value. Understand that you can't take everybody with you. Be careful taking advice from someone who hasn't been where you're going. Have no fear. NEVER TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER! LaKeitha Van Zandt Muckelroy, Caring Hands Adult Day Center

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Be humble and ready to learn. Have a vision in mind for your company and plan around the vision. Love and value the process of what you are doing, don't focus on dollars earned and outcomes. Consider how what you are doing impacts the local community around you and the world.

Justin McLaughlin, Xenia Roastery



LAKEITHA VAN ZANDT MUCKELROY Caring Hands Adult Day Center — an in-home adult

daycare with virtual programs conducted by licensed health care professionals.



ANA AMBRIZ AMP Materials

 a materials management company that specializes in supplying reinforced rebar steel for commercial building projects. which changed how she could connect with her construction contacts. Instead of face-to-face meetings, she turned to automating processes and creating a website for sales bids. Despite the limitations, she notes the steel market "has taken its biggest increase in years" and she recently landed her first major contract.

Bousquet, who already was in business prior to being named a participant, has focused on staying the course on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and first-aid medical training, while also working to become a distributor of AEDs and first-aid equipment.

For **Van Zandt Muckelroy**, a big hurdle to launching her medical business is obtaining the necessary credentials. "During COVID, I have experienced months and months of not being able to speak to a 'live person' at the multiple entities necessary to obtain our licensure/certifications." She has embraced these challenges as an "opportunity to evolve as an entrepreneur," being innovative and thinking out of the box to get her business off the ground.

Peterson also encountered challenges related to the pandemic, noting that the "business lost momentum when COVID hit in the first quarter of 2020." She ramped up marketing via word-of-mouth and begin discounting her writing services to clients who experienced job losses, which helped to compensate for lost speaking opportunities. "I have been focusing more on the writing portion of my business as a revenue generator," she explained, while expanding her services into grant writing.

While **Brown's** event business is formed and generating "some revenue," she's choosing to focus on "marketing the business effectively and knowing what inventory to purchase first." Similarly, **Walker's** therapy ranch business is also well underway, with his current focus on livestock acquisition, capital improvement projects and marketing to promote and advertise his business. For Viola, who established his business in 2019, the focus is on growth. "I had only a handful of jobs my first year," he explained, adding that today he has one main client. To grow, he recognizes that he'll need to increase his marketing efforts.

Sharp is in lease negotiations on the location for her new café and has hired an architect to design the space. "Once the lease is executed, the architect will begin drafting the plans and other construction documents necessary to obtain permits," she explained. In parallel with these efforts,

Set goals and include a timeline to monitor your progress. Don't be afraid to pursue your dreams, but make sure you complete your homework prior to moving forward. Your homework includes identifying your purpose, target market, and the amount of capital necessary to get started. **Carlos Walker, Akachi Ranch**

Map out a BIG plan in the beginning for where you want to go with your business, and it will guide you all the way through even when you hit those big bumps in the road like the COVID-19 pandemic. My business plan has done this for me, and I simply fine-tune or add to it as I work with LivePlan in the TCC courses now. Always think bigger so you will be able to pivot. Research automation ahead of time, identifying the tools that you would want/need to use as your business grows. However, to preserve funds, do not purchase these programs/ courses / automation tools before you actually need them.

Arlene Peterson, Arlene Speaks It



CARLOS WALKER Akachi Ranch – a working ranch where visitors can come to heal through horse therapy and other programs.



ARLENE PETERSON Arlene Speaks It

 a consulting service that provides individual and corporate support on everything for diversity training to individual career coaching. she continues to interview other "coffeepreneurs" for advice on sourcing suppliers and developing the marketing and communications strategy.

TCC's Role

TCC has taken a customized approach, working with each entrepreneur to provide resources, educational training and advisory support. The yearlong program brings the group together to share common challenges and lessons learned. Several of the entrepreneurs had initial experiences with the Tarrant Small Business Development Center prior to being selected for the program.

"SBDC was helpful to me before Xenia Roastery was formed," **McLaughlin** said. "The staff helped me with the planning and ideation of my business, as well as pivots." Once assimilated into the EEVF initiative, he said he has found the interaction with the other entrepreneurs "helpful in learning about different funding opportunities, as well as sharing ideas." **Walker** can attest to this, noting that the program has helped him "prepare our financials to receive a business loan," investing the resources to make Akachi Ranch grow.

For **Ambriz**, it all boils down to one word: "Support." She explained that "if it weren't for the support of the advisors and the cohort, I don't know if I would be where I am today. They have helped me know, identify and work on my personal strengths and weaknesses, and I've become exposed to Minority and HUB certifications I knew nothing about." More importantly, she credits the program with "bringing me greater confidence and the feeling of having a great team behind me." **Bousquet** summed it up, noting that the initiative "has provided us with a mentor, funding and a curriculum tailor-made to our specific needs. Their resources are endless! Anytime I have questions, or I need guidance, I always have someone to turn to."

Van Zandt Muckelroy agrees. "I am able to obtain direction, guidance and advice from professionals with an immense amount of knowledge and wisdom. This business has been a dream of mine since 2017, and TCC is allowing me to make it a reality." Said **Peterson**, "The on-demand business development help has been priceless, especially on complex questions."

Along with shared resources, motivation and support, **Sharp** notes that "the assignments provide accountability. They are helping me to sharpen my business identity and overall concept. The guest speakers also expand

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Have all your ducks in a row prior to jumping into any endeavor. Take all the help and advice you can get. Be ready for challenges you never anticipated and don't give up. You will get out of it what you put into it.

Philip Viola, Nor-Tex Drone Services

I am still a novice in this entrepreneurial journey, but the following has worked for me in this early stage: 1) Commit to progress over perfection; 2) Be vulnerable enough to share your vision with others before its fully baked; and 3) Do not neglect doing the work to plan for your business, but don't limit yourself to what feels safe. Activate your faith with action, respect the process and watch it manifest!

Charletra Sharp, Cup O' Vibes



PHILIP VIOLA Nor-Tex Drone Services — a drone video service that provides aerial footage for real estate and other applications.



CHARLETRA SHARP Cup O' Vibes

 a specialty café featuring coffee and ethnic drinks in South Arlington. our business network and have introduced the cohort to resources that will help our businesses thrive." **Brown** said she has improved her marketing and social media presence by "learning how to profile my ideal client," while **Viola** has turned to TCC for "advice on how to market myself," as well as for answers to legal questions, guidance on creating a business plan and networking opportunities.

Utilizing Seed Funding

Along with training and mentorship, each entrepreneur has received seed funding to help cover expenses. How has the first cohort utilized the much-needed resources?

- **Xenia Roastery** Paid operational costs, installing an HVAC system for the roasting machine and covered lease payments for their 1,000-square-foot space.
- **Caring Hands Adult Day Center** Commissioned updates to their website and paid fees to obtain required licensure/certifications to operate in the state of Texas.
- **AMP Materials** Utilized funding to develop and launch a website and pay for minority certification, etc.
- **Akachi Ranch** Committed funds to capital improvement projects and is currently seeking additional funding to build a pavilion with restrooms and showers for campers.
- Arlene Speaks It Paid marketing and promotions expenses, as well as legal and tax service fees.
- **Nor-Tex Drone Services** Dedicated funds to marketing costs and equipment upgrades.
- **Cup O' Vibes** Used funding to help cover insurance, marketing needs, permits and retainer fees.
- **In Good Hands** Expanded into fire safety, purchasing equipment and covering installation, maintenance and inspection of extinguishers and fire suppression systems.
- **TK Events Rentals** Acquired new inventory and helped to pay for event design certification.

Keep your nose to the grindstone and make it a habit to better yourself and the company every single day. Realize that starting a business will take up to 80 percent of your time, but never forget that the other 20 percent is what matters at the end of the day, which is the time you spend with your loved ones and time for self-care!

Brent Bousquet, In Good Hands

Don't give up, stay the course. Keep your eye on what you are trying to achieve. Do not be too prideful to ask for help. Be honest with what you do not know. Be open, allowing someone to assist you in those areas. DELEGATE! **Timesha Brown, TK Events Rentals**



BRENT BOUSQUET In Good Hands

 an emergency medical training service for individuals, corporations and health care workers requiring certification.



TIMESHA BROWN TK Events Rentals

 a party event rental company supporting small to large venues.

Looking Toward the Future

Although it's challenging to predict, especially in today's unprecedented times, the first cohort of entrepreneurs all have a future-perfect vision of where they'd like to be in the next three to five years, both in terms of financial and community impact.

Justin McLaughlin would like Xenia Roastery to be well established and growing. "I see Xenia having a second roasting location and direct-purchase relationships with coffee farmers from at least five different countries around the world. I also see entrepreneurship training programs established with local school districts and young brown and black entrepreneurs being encouraged to find their walk and path in entrepreneurship."

In five years, **Ana Ambriz** expects to be fully set up and working on government projects. "I will be quoting larger projects since I expect to have a credit line that allows my business to fund them. I also hope to be working out of a business office space with the ability to hire an employee or a small group of selected individuals who will continue to help the business grow."

Brent Bousquet said he would like to see In Good Hands turn into a large business that takes a stronghold within the Metroplex within the next three to five years. "I like to keep large goals and dreams," he explained, adding, "I would love to see IGH become a national name one day!"

For **Carlos Walker**, it is all about improving the experience for guests at Akachi Ranch. "We plan to have cabins for guests who prefer a camping experience, along with an event center for family reunions, parties, quinceañeras, weddings, etc. We also hope to purchase additional property for more livestock, including cattle, goats, horses and pigs."

In the next three to five years, **Charletra Sharp** envisions Cup o' Vibes as a household name in her community. "Our customer base will expand from our residential neighbors to commercial neighbors. We will expand our products to evolve with the interest of our consumer family. Financially, we will have a 100 percent return on our investment and achieve profitability. Cup o' Vibes will be recognized as a Small Business of the Year, and we will scale our model to increase our reach."

Arlene Peterson hopes to grow her business into a high-performing consulting agency, helping clients land high-paying jobs of typically \$80K and up, or increasing their pay by a large percentage. She also hopes to be a sought-after speaker, regularly presenting at colleges and universities in Texas, helping "to get students more prepared for the changing job landscape." In addition, she'd like to be speaking at large nonprofits (that offer job training and other programs), "discussing their role in the changing job market and sharing the real-world tools they need to thrive and not just survive."

In the next three to five years, **LaKeitha Van Zandt Muckelroy** said she hopes to be "well established in providing our services nationally if not world-wide," adding that "being innovative means that we are not locked into the confines of a brick-and-mortar facility."

Timesha Brown sees a storefront with a carpenter on staff and possibly a venue to actually rent out as well, adding that she'd also like to "be able to actually teach classes five years from now to other creatives."

"Since I am creeping up on retirement from my career, I am looking to supplement my income," said **Philip Viola**, whose five-year goal is to "be making at least as much as I am now at working my regular job."

Community Impact

"Long-term, we expect this program to have significant impact on the community," said Shannon Bryant, TCC executive vice president of TCC Corporate Solutions & Economic Development (CSED). "This is helping people who otherwise may not have the resources to launch and sustain a new business, which ultimately helps our community to grow and thrive." Adds Rodney Johnson, director of Tarrant SBDC, the entrepreneurship program ultimately helps participants find their own way. "If we are successful, these entrepreneurs will have learned how to work through all manner of dilemmas and know how to get the answers they need to be successful."

Tarrant County College's First Cohort for Everyday Entrepreneur Venture Fund

Chosen from a pool of 26 applicants, the EEVF projects ranged from a ranch offering programs to help those struggling with trauma, to adult daycare utilizing virtual technology, a drone video service that captures aerial footage, and more. Each cohort participant received seed funding to help bring their business idea to life, as well as 12 months of group and customized training to hone their skills through learning and development programs at TCC and its Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which is part of TCC Corporate Solutions & Economic Development (CSED).

Are you a small business owner wanting to grow, or an entrepreneur with a promising start-up business idea? Call TCC CSED at 817.515.2500 or email corporate.solutions@ tccd.edu for more information.

Hiting the Right Note

TCC EMPLOYEE AND ALUMNA MAKES A DIFFERENCE THROUGH HER MUSIC

By Kendra Prince

he year was 1975. North Side High School student Carlos Saenz wanted to help raise funds for the Spanish Club to go to Six Flags. So, he started a band called Latin Express. They sold out the school auditorium during second period for .50 a ticket and raised close to \$200. Ultimately, the band raised enough to buy everyone a ticket to Six Flags, t-shirts and food, with enough left over to go toward the Spanish Club funds for the following year.

Little did Saenz know that more than 45 years later, Latin Express would still be performing in venues across the United States, including the Inaugural Gala for President George W. Bush in 2001. Additionally, the band would win multiple awards and recognitions, such as being the first North Texas band to be inducted into the Tejano Roots Hall of Fame.

"I can't believe all the support we have had all these years," said Saenz. "Our fans and friends keep us going."

Saenz also credits the endurance of the band to his children, niece and nephews, who play in the band. In fact, everyone in the band is related to Saenz. "They all keep what our family has worked for going."

Family is important to Saenz, who had that point driven home to him in the '90s when he traveled with another band. "I noticed that the guys I would travel with were not very close to their kids," he said. "They would miss holidays and events because of the job of music. But, when my kids got in the band, it made it feel like I was always home. Having Mariza in the band all these years later feels like home."

Lam a Chi

I am a Chicana or what you may call Mexican American. I am a musician in the Chicano/Tejano market, where women musicians are rare. My dad told me and my sister, 'You are going to have to work harder than anyone else. This is a man's world, and you are women. Being good is not enough, you have to be great.' He was right. Those words are why I produce the best work both on stage and at work for Tarrant County College.

Mariza Olmos



Mariza is Saenz's daughter, TCC Academic Support Specialist Mariza Olmos, who joined the band in 1995 at the age of 14 as keyboardist. She also contributes vocals. "I knew I wanted to play in the band when I was a little girl," she said. "When my dad would have the musicians over at the house rehearsing, I would always tell his keyboard players I would take their job one day. And, I did!"

According to Saenz, Mariza's interest in music began when she was about three years old. "I would be on our baby grand piano arranging music, and she would walk in there and listen to me play," he said. "I started giving her basic piano lessons, but I did not know where it would lead. She just liked it."

"Is there anyone who does not love music?" Olmos mused. "Music is an escape. Music is getting to relive a feeling over and over again, and music is a way to tell someone how you feel without saying the words. One time, I was playing a gig and this 92-year-old woman came up to me and said, 'You made me feel like a 16-year-old girl all over again. Thank you!' Music is transcendent, and it feels good to provide that."

Practice, Practice, Practice

Music careers often come with great sacrifice. Olmos' career in music is no exception. She says being in the band taught her the importance of being part of a team and its associated responsibilities. "I was a kid when I started playing music. When they said, 'Mariza, we want to make you the keyboard player and vocalist, but it takes dedication, sacrifice and time...are you ready for this?' I said, 'Yes.'"

Instead of going to school dances, parties and sporting events, Olmos practiced. "I was a musician. I was practicing every day and playing music all over the United States, and I don't regret it at all," she said.

Finding a New Way to Play

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Latin Express would play a minimum of 140 to 175 gigs per year. "We are hired for all sorts of events, parties and concerts," said Olmos. "We play Chicano music, Salsa, Country, Rock, Blues, R&B, Jazz, etc. We do not limit our music to just one genre. We enjoy performing for all!"

Understandably, the pandemic had an adverse effect on bookings. According to Olmos, her musician friends struggled. "My family had to figure out what our next move would be." Her father and uncle started doing socially distanced gigs with a quartet, taking a generator and instruments to perform outside of people's homes so they could enjoy some live music.

"Our first performance as a whole was virtual and distanced for the Levitt Pavilion in May 2020," she said. "It was a happy-sad occasion. We had been quarantined from each other." They were not only bandmates, but also



family. "I hadn't hugged or seen my dad or family in eight weeks. We still didn't embrace each other and stood six feet apart as we performed for 10,000 people virtually. I still choke up thinking of how happy I was to perform, and how sad I was that I couldn't hug my own dad."

Olmos says that since the vaccines have started flowing, the band has definitely picked up larger gigs, with some dates already booked a year out. "I don't mind. Not having gigs was a struggle, so I am looking forward to more performances."

Latin Express recently played virtually for an event for Trinity River Student Development Services. "It was super cool, because I got to take my lunch break and perform for TCC people," said Olmos. "A little mix of my weekday and weekend life."

Rolling Out the Welcome Mat

Olmos found out about TCC at one of her gigs when she met Michael Saenz (no relation), president of TCC Northwest at the time. "I did not know who he was, but he encouraged me to go to school," she said. "When I showed up at the campus, I gave him a call. He met me in the lobby, walked me around the campus and then guided me to an academic advisor. When the advisor told Olmos who Saenz was, she was taken aback. "I knew I wanted to go to school where I was welcomed."

Not only did Olmos attend TCC, she started working

for the College in 2008 as administrative assistant in Continuing Education at TCC Northwest. Ultimately, she became an academic support specialist in 2015 and still serves in that role today.

Community Outreach

In addition to producing award-winning music, Latin Express also steps up when there is a need. "We have served the community as much as we can," said Saenz. "People reach out to us to help them raise money because cancer has caused high medical bills, or they can't pay their house payment because they have been sick, or students are trying to raise money so they also can meet a dream or goal. When they ask, we are ready."

Olmos says being in the band has taught her the importance of being involved in the community – a philosophy instilled in her by her family since she was a child. "We have helped raise money for food banks, natural disaster funds and scholarships," she said.

Olmos' mother, Rachel Lopez, who serves as an administrative assistant in Student Success Initiatives, admires her daughter's interest in music as well as serving her community. "Mariza has always put her all in everything she does," she said. "The love she shares with her family overflows to her friends and into the community through her gift of listening, donating time for those in need and especially singing to raise funds for worthy causes that help impact and uplift others. I am very proud of her."

Lourdes Davenport, coordinator at the Center for English Language Learning ESL and ESOL at TCC Northwest, shares Olmos' interest in community involvement. "Mariza and I have worked together in the community both directly and indirectly," she said. "I saw her at many community outreach events promoting TCC Northwest Continuing Education (CE) programs and sometimes singing with Latin Express. Mariza always acknowledges TCC in the audience! She makes people feel heard and seen."

Olmos worked with Leah Ojeda, coordinator of scheduling in TCC Trinity River Academic Support Services, in Continuing Education at TCC Northwest. While there, Olmos played with Latin Express for events and would bring up the many opportunities TCC had to offer its students and the community. "Mariza has always been a huge advocate for TCC and all that we serve," said Ojeda. "She has encouraged many community members to join TCC – from elementary-aged children for our College for Kids program, up to our community seniors for the Senior Education program."

Grants Compliance Specialist Henry Crosby agrees. "I see Mariza constantly promoting TCC and our programs to people in the community and encouraging them to pursue higher education. Everyone in the community is a prospective student with the wide range of classes that we offer."

Richard Vela, director of college readiness and dual credit operations, says it is important for TCC and its employees to be involved with the community. "It's a great opportunity for TCC employees to know and understand those who we serve in the community," he said. "Mariza serves as great role model in this regard. She is constantly involved (with) and stays committed to improve opportunities to those in Tarrant County."

Crediting Olmos with serving on planning committees for Hispanic Heritage events, both on campus and in the community, Vesta Martinez, director of student development services at TCC Northwest, says as a member of Latin Express, Olmos "forged connections between campus and community resources and talent. She was instrumental in providing musical entertainment to TCC students and also coordinated efforts to bring the North Side High School Mariachi Band to campus to perform." The result? "The campus and community response to these events was extremely positive and allowed students to interact with each other to share their love of music and culture."

Susie Olmos-Soto, Olmos' director when she first joined the District, believes staying connected to the community is critical. "If you're not connected to the wants and needs (of community members), then you do not serve people well," she said. "Mariza is incredibly personable and energetic on and off the stage, in and outside of her role at TCC! Her ability to engage with a multi-generational population and diverse community of school districts and business stakeholders served (still does!) our department and College District well.

Chance Encounter

After 25 years of performing, Olmos has her share of interesting stories. She remembers one Thursday night playing for an event for The Association for Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE). "My music life is my weekend life. At the time, not many of my TCC peeps had seen me perform. So, I am playing my gig, and in the audience I see Dr. Elva LeBlanc, who was the president of TCC Northwest at the time. I had spoken to her a few times, but here she was, watching me perform. My dad introduced the band at the end of the night and said, 'This is my daughter, Mariza. She is a TCC CE guru by day, and a musician by night.' Olmos said she got nervous.

After the show, LeBlanc came up to her and told her she enjoyed the show and said, "Goodnight. I will see you tomorrow morning at the office!" Olmos remembers nodding "yes."

Her boss was surprised to see her the next day because Olmos had asked to take the day off. Olmos replied, "I ran into Dr. LeBlanc, and she expects me here." Although LeBlanc never asked Olmos to give up her time off, Olmos was so afraid of disappointing her, she showed up anyway. "I still think about that almost 10 years later!"

Simply the Best

It is important to Olmos to give her best, whether she is at the office or on stage. "I am a Chicana or what you may call Mexican American. I am a musician in the Chicano/Tejano market, where women musicians are rare. My dad told me and my sister, 'You are going to have to work harder than anyone else. This is a man's world, and you are women. Being good is not enough, you have to be great.' He was right. Those words are why I produce the best work both on stage and at work for Tarrant County College."

To learn more about Latin Express, check out their website: http://www.latinexpressband.com

Listen to Mariza's performance of her composition, "Querido": https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=P_-I1tJBPu4&list=RDAMVMP_-I1tJBPu4



CRITICAL &



THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS REINFORCED THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALIFIED, COMMITTED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS — HERE'S HOW TCC IS EXPANDING ITS OFFERINGS TO MEET COMMUNITY NEED AND CONNECT STUDENTS TO HIGH-DEMAND, REWARDING CAREERS.

By Alexis Patterson

hen Haylee Franks graduated from high school in 2018, she wasn't sure what she wanted to do with her life. Her mom worked for an ophthalmologist — a doctor who specializes in vision care — and invited her to shadow workers in the office. Suddenly, Franks had found her calling.

"I found myself falling in love with the profession right away," says Franks, who took a job helping a doctor in a small ophthalmology clinic.

Still, there was only so much Franks could do in the field with the education she had at the time. To progress in her career and boost her paycheck, she decided to go back to school — enrolling in Tarrant County College's Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA) program. Today, Franks helps care for patients under the direction of a retina specialist at Ophthalmology Associates, a multispecialty vision clinic in Fort Worth.

"TCC prepared me for my career because I had an amazing instructor who was able to explain topics fully in different ways, so each student was able to learn and grasp the material," Franks shares. "My instructor also brought in guest speakers who were in diverse fields inside the ophthalmology world, helping us find the right paths for ourselves."

Job openings for ophthalmic assistants and technicians abound in North Texas and across the nation. To ensure the need is met, the College is growing its ophthalmology offerings.

TCC has long had robust health care professions programs, training professionals including registered nurses, surgical technologists, anesthesia technologists, EKG technicians, physical therapy assistants and respiratory care workers, among many others. The expansion of ophthalmology learning opportunities is another example of how TCC partners with business and industry to support the local health care environment. Here are this Fall's new programs that will train students for in-demand careers and help ensure that Tarrant County residents have access to vital services for their well-being.

Visualizing Success: Ophthalmic Technician Program

TCC began its ophthalmology offerings in 2011 in its Continuing Education division. The non-credit program, which Franks completed, prepares students to take the COA certification exam and join the field in an entrylevel capacity.

With demand for ophthalmic medical personnel set to grow some 25 percent in the next decade, TCC developed its Ophthalmic Technician program which will train students for the certified ophthalmic technician (COT) role, a more advanced position. Ophthalmic technicians have an array of responsibilities such as collecting medical histories, performing diagnostic tests to measure the patient's optical system, calculating basic correction for refractive errors of the eye, and recording anatomic and physiologic data in the clinic.

The program, based at TCC Trinity River, offers two stackable certificates (Level I and Level II) and culminates in the Associate of Applied Science. Classes include Vision Care Office Procedures, The Visual System, Basic Contact Lenses, Ophthalmic Techniques and Ophthalmic Surgical Techniques. Students learn from experienced instructors and participate in clinical rotations under the supervision of current professionals in real care settings. At the conclusion of their degree, graduates will sit for the ophthalmic technician national certification exam, administered by the International Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology. Professionals may work in ophthalmology clinics, research settings, education programs and other locations.

A two-year program spanning five semesters, TCC's Ophthalmic Technician program represents a rapid path to a solid career. "Local employment listings for ophthalmic medical personnel exceed the national average," says Suzanne Hansen, a certified ophthalmic medical technologist (COMT) and the program's codirector, who has worked in ophthalmic education for 18 years. "An advanced degree — a bachelor's or beyond — is not required. However, graduates can continue career growth following the program with additional work experience to sit for higher national certification examinations as well."

For Tarrant County residents who are ready to enter the workforce or change careers, a pathway that doesn't come with the financial obligations of a university education is invaluable. "TCC classes are very affordable, which make them an amazing option for someone who might not be able to afford traditional four-year college tuition," Franks points out.

When graduates enter the workforce, they'll have strong salary potential. According to a 2019 survey from the Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology, COT positions pay between approximately \$53,000 and \$69,000. Annual pay for the COA role can range from \$31,000 to \$37,000. And Franks says every day brings something new. "There are no two patients alike," she reflects. "Each patient has a new set of problems, and there's a new set of solutions you help the doctor obtain."

Hands-On Care: Certified Nursing Assistant Program

Certified nursing assistants (CNAs) are valuable members of patient care teams. These professionals provide basic care functions, such as turning or moving patients, bathing and grooming them, checking vital signs and transporting patients. Local demand for nursing assistants is steadily increasing, and Texas is among the top five states for employment of CNAs.

TCC's newly relaunched CNA program, a noncredit Continuing Education option, will provide students a combination of classroom instruction and clinical practice under the guidance of a registered nurse. The six-week program consists of two courses. The first prepares students for nursing assistant care duties and covers topics such as resident/patient rights, communication, safety and interacting with members of the health care team; the second course is the workbased learning experience that allows students to apply the skills and concepts in actual care locations. Graduates earn a certificate and CEUs (Continuing Education units, signifying their completion), and they are eligible and prepared to sit for the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program exam. They can go on to work at long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, hospitals and home-health agencies, and CNAs have a median annual wage of \$30,850 across the nation. Top earners can have a wage of more than \$40,000, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

While CNA is an entry-level health care position that provides quick access to the job market, it also is a great steppingstone to other careers. "A CNA may decide to add to their certifications by becoming a medical assistant or a patient care technician, or to move forward as a nurse and sign up for the vocational nursing or registered nurse degree programs here at TCC," explains Varnessa Dorsey, a registered nurse and TCC nursing instructor who is overseeing the CNA program. "The options are wide open."

Are you interested in a health care career? Talk to the experts at TCC about your affordable path to success. Contact the Health Care Professions Advising Resource Hub at 817-515-1484 or TR.HealthCareAdvising@ tccd.edu.

ENGAGED PLAY 71 **FOSTERS** LIFELONG LEARNING By Gina Brasseur ow many times has this happened? Someone is in a waiting room at a doctor's office or while getting a car serviced, and it's taking longer than expected. After scrolling through social media on a phone and finding nothing new, they open an app to play a game. Nothing too hard, nothing requiring too

much brainpower. Just a simple game to pass the time. But what if that game were making them smarter? Or helping them earn a living wage? In one way or another, games have relevance in every season of life.

BABY NOT ON BOARD

A newborn baby or a toddler wouldn't understand how to play a board game like chess or Monopoly but playing other types of age-appropriate games is vital to their development. "Playing is how children learn," said Lisa Self, program coordinator of child development at TCC Northeast. "Any games that are played with babies, toddlers or preschoolers help them to make more connections in their synapses in their brains. The more connections, the better brain function."

Games can teach children many things, like following the rules, taking turns, solving problems, social development and seeing another's perspective. "The more positive, engaging experiences children have when they are 0 to 3 years old, the better they will do in school," said Self.

But Self warns, competitive games are not developmentally appropriate for young children. "Yes, they need to learn there are winners and losers in the world, but we need to think about the purpose of the games at this age. Young children are not ready to be told they are the 'loser' when they play games," added Self. "We want to encourage children to play and learn, not to dislike games because it made them sad."

CLASSROOM CONNECTION

According to researchers, there are three dominant ways a person learns new information or skills: by

IN TWO YEARS OR FEWER, A STUDENT CAN EARN AN ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCES DEGREE IN GAME, SIMULATION AND ANIMATION DESIGN OR A LEVEL 1 OR LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE IN PROGRAMMING OR DESIGN.

seeing, by hearing or by doing. In the popular television show, *The Big Bang Theory*, Sheldon claimed he learned how to swim by reading a book about it. The other characters laugh because they know it is highly unlikely to learn such a physical skill from only reading about it. Some skills can be learned only by doing them.

In the same way, lessons taught in the classroom must be presented in different and unique ways. "It's being done via gamebased learning," said Johansen Quijano, associate professor of English at TCC Trinity River. "Instructors are making more engaging classes and reward systems for students, which leads to heightened interest in the course. Through game-based learning, instructors are using games to introduce topics, explore themes and engage in practice."

"I'm hesitant to say playing games can make someone smarter, but games do help develop skills that are considered as part of being smart," added Quijano. "For example, playing strategy games helps develop problem-solving skills; playing story-intensive role-playing games can help develop language skills; and playing puzzle games may prevent Alzheimer's."

Allegra Davis Hanna, instructor of English for TCC Connect, agrees. "Hopefully the classroom of the future will look a little chaotic, because so many students will be active, discussing topics, creating things, helping one another and getting excited when they understand something new."

TCC is focusing on Engaged Learning as a part of its Three Goals and Eight Principles (3G8P) work. "Engaged Learning is about the learner being an involved participant in the process of finding, examining, applying or reframing information," said Hanna. "It focuses more on developing skills than transmitting knowledge. Many games can help students process and understand information."

GAMIFICATION OF SOCIETY

Games have been a part of society for many millennia. The ancient Olympic games are believed to date back more than 2,000 years. On the opposite end of the timeline, modern-day companies like Amazon have created an app to turn the tedium of warehouse work into a game. Packing items efficiently into boxes or loading trucks for delivery is like real-life Tetris.

"Gamification is the practice of adding a game layer and playful components to activities that are not inherently playful," said Quijano. "Many organizations, especially businesses, are trying to use gamification to bring in new consumers and keep their current consumers engaged."

Yearly gaming events at various TCC campuses called "Gaming for Change" bring together faculty, staff, students and community





TYPES OF GAMES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

By Johansen Quijano

Strategy games (*"Civilization" and "Ages of Empire"*), tactics games (*"Final Fantasy Tactics" and "XCom"*) and puzzle games (*"Tetris" and "The Witness"*) can help develop problem-solving skills.

Story-intensive role-playing games ("*Final Fantasy 7 Remake*" *and "Persona 5 Royale*") can help develop language skills.

Action-intensive games (both first-person games like "*Call of Duty*," "*Battlefield*," and "Doom," as well as fast-paced fighting games like "*Dragon Ball Fighter Z*," "*Street Fighter V*" and "*Marvel v Capcom*") can help develop spatial awareness, coordination and eye movement.

Games where the story clashes with the

gameplay (*"Skyrim,"* for example, gives the player an "urgent mission" then lets the player explore the world) can help players develop analytic and critical thinking skills.

Massively multiplayer online (MMO) games (*"World of Warcraft," "Skyforge"* and *"Trove"*) can also be a practice ground for developing social awareness and other social skills.

Please review all games for age appropriateness before allowing a child to play.

members to compete, build communities, learn from each other and win prizes. Earlier this year, more than 70 people attended "The River Speaks Presents: Gaming is Everywhere" event at TCC Trinity River. The event included speakers on the topics of e-sports, careers in gaming and app development and finding wellbeing support through gaming communities.

Quijano concluded, "A recent paper I read shows that games can inspire creativity, serve as stress release, enhance memory and help build communities. There is a caveat, though, and it's that the gaming can't be forced. If someone is forced to play a game, not only will they not see the benefits, but they will also likely grow to actively dislike them."

GAMING CAREERS

TCC offers many different courses of study for students who want to pursue a career in gaming-related disciplines.

In two years or fewer, a student can earn an Associate of Applied Sciences degree in Game, Simulation and Animation Design or a Level 1 or Level 2 certificate in programming or design. After completing a course of study, students will have professional demo reels that can be used for entry-level job interviews in video game development, game/tv/movie animation or motion graphics designing.

For more information on TCC's gaming programs, see: www.tccd.edu/GameDesign

To learn more about TCC's 3G8P work, visit: www.tccd.edu/CollegeGoals





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The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries — to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom. **bell hook**

Eric Castillo, Ph.D. is TCC's Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer. To learn more about equity and inclusion opportunities at TCC, visit: www.tccd.edu/equity

Justice and Higher Education in the 21st Century

MOVING FROM AWARENESS OF INJUSTICE TO CHANGE

By Eric Castillo

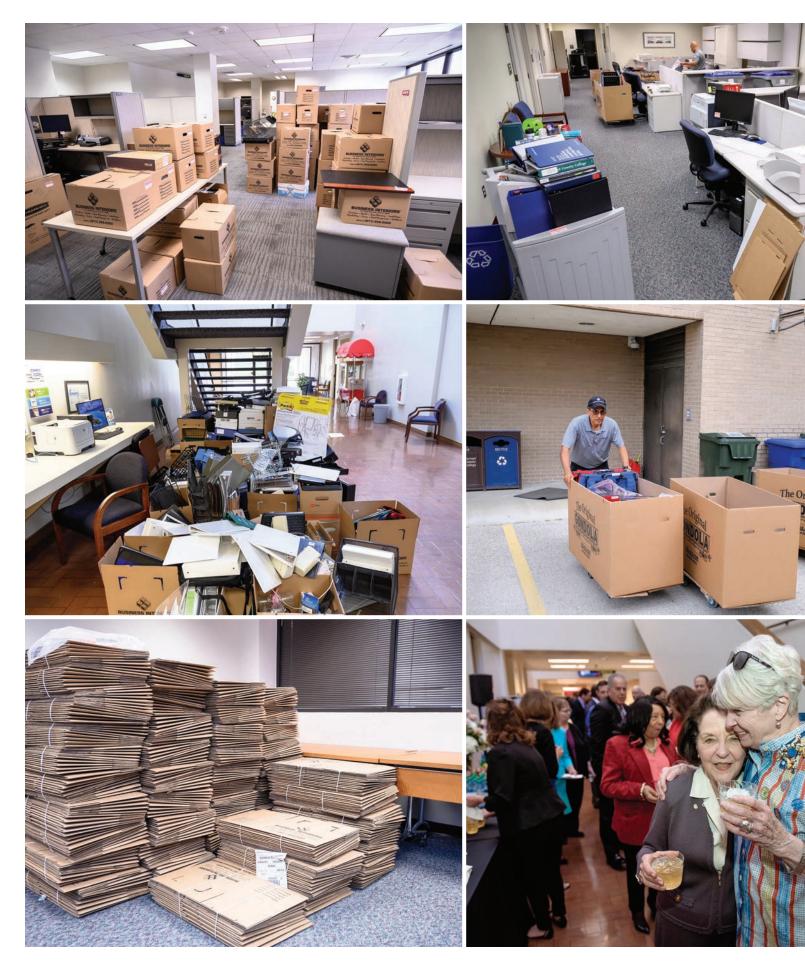
A s a chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer, I rely on self-reflection as a necessary tool for co-creating positive and sustainable change. I apply what I learned from community elders, activists, healers, scholars and thought leaders in my daily practice of building relationships and communities that resist oppression and uplift solidarity. Their wisdom reminds me we must include communities most impacted by colonialism, white supremacy and heteropatriarchy – communities that represent the global majority – to help design a future where we *all* can thrive as our authentic and whole selves.

Doing so may prove an iterative process, as it has been since organizations and institutions first began diversity, equity and inclusion work in earnest more than 40 years ago. In the early 2000s, industries shifted from a multicultural (food, fun, festival) framework to a more focused effort on numerical diversity and inclusive hiring practices. But in our global civil rights moment, we must consider justice as the unifying element of our diversity, equity and inclusion strategy. I believe it requires we undergo significant personal and social change. Justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) are the crucial elements in creating environments that eliminate barriers and produce opportunities.

Given our existing social climate of violence and discrimination, what appeared to be outside of our educational terrain must make its way into the core of what we do. Social and economic injustice have always been present in education, but our neglect of justice and liberation as institutional outcomes means we fall short in upending inequality.

We must apply social justice strategies into our higher-ed JEDI work — capacity building, mobilizing our people power, advancing JEDI as institutional priorities from "the bottom up," and constantly retooling our organizing efforts — to address the new opportunities and challenges before us. In short, we need to build an ecosystem in which our work and our lived experiences thrive. While our work may never be done, causing "good trouble" by moving from awareness to changed habits will help us rebuild higher education into an ecosystem where we all can succeed.

I have hope in the future of education, and I lean into bell hooks' wisdom about its role in liberation: "The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries — to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom."











Saying Goodbye to May Owen Center

TCC ADMINISTRATION RELOCATES TO TCC TRINITY RIVER

By Bill Lace

t was June 24, 2021, and the May Owen Center, home to Tarrant County College's administrative offices since 1983, was in chaos. "Boxes are everywhere," said Vice Chancellor Reginald Gates. In just a few days, all would be quiet as employees moved to new digs at TCC Trinity River.

Turn the clock back to March 3, 1983. Same picture. "Boxes were everywhere," said Associate Vice Chancellor Nancy Chang. The difference was that these boxes were coming in, not going out.

The building's days as a TCC facility likely were numbered when the College moved into West Fork, the last part of Trinity River to be occupied. It made fiscal sense, the Board of Trustees decided in 2019, to move into space already owned by TCC and to put the MOC up for sale.

Growing pains had been the norm for TCC campuses in their early decades, and the central offices were by no means immune. They had been in the Electric Service Building at 7th and Houston in downtown Fort Worth since 1966 and by the late '70s had taken up the entire 14th floor and were spreading, like an invasive plant, to the floor below.

Clearly it was time to move, but where? Actually, just down the street.

The area between 8th Street and Lancaster Ave. had an unsavory reputation going back to before the turn of the century with a proliferation of bars and brothels. Fort Worth citizens called it Hell's Half-Acre, but the more AFTER ALL THE BOXES WERE UNPACKED AND PEOPLE SETTLED IN, THE BUILDING WAS FORMALLY DEDICATED IN A CEREMONY ON APRIL 15. IT WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH... EXCEPT WHEN AN HONOR GUARD WAS SUPPOSED TO MARCH SHOULDER TO SHOULDER TO THE FLAGPOLE JUST INSIDE THE PARKING LOT. THE LOT WAS PACKED WITH HAPHAZARDLY PARKED VEHICLES, THOUGH, SO THAT THE FLAG BEARERS HAD TO SNAKE THEIR WAY AROUND IN SINGLE FILE.

genteel name was Lower Main, and people said that Lower Main got lower and lower every year.

By 1960, most of the saloons and salons had been shuttered, but the area remained an eyesore with empty storefronts and derelict buildings. Travelers arriving at the Texas and Pacific train depot, if they were on foot, had to traverse the area before reaching the more refined part of downtown.

It certainly wasn't what the city leaders wanted as a front door, so they created the Chamber of Commerce Development Corporation that bought up a large swath of the area, much of which was used for the Fort Worth Convention Center and, later, the Fort Worth Water Gardens. By 1981, the only parcels left were 32,000 square feet on a block bounded by 14th Street, Lancaster, Houston and Throckmorton and a 16,000-squarefoot piece on the west side of Throckmorton. The College snapped up both for a total price of \$840,400, hired an architect and in March 1982, awarded a \$2.2 million construction contract.

The new headquarters needed a name, and in September, Trustee John Lamond moved the name May C. Owen District Center be approved. This was a surprise, and an unpleasant one, to the venerable Trustee Owen, who objected naming it for anyone, particularly her. "And where in the world did you get 'Macy'?" she grumped. Lamond repeated the motion only to told by Owen that she didn't have a middle name or initial. "Good, Dr. Owen," he responded. "You just saved us \$5 on the sign."

After all the boxes were unpacked and people settled in, the building was formally dedicated in a ceremony on April 15. It went off without a hitch... except when an honor guard was supposed to march shoulder to shoulder to the flagpole just inside the parking lot. The lot was packed with haphazardly parked vehicles, though, so that the flag bearers had to snake their way around in single file.

The College did not have, nor did it at that time desire, a downtown campus, but Chancellor

Joe Rushing wanted an educational footprint in the central business district. So it was that half of the bottom floor was given over to classrooms designed to serve downtown with classes in business, accounting and office administration. To help publicize the classes, some MOC employees took handfuls of brochures and flyers up the street and fanned out like proselytizing missionaries, handing out literature to any who would take it.

The MOC classes never really caught on and over the years, the classrooms got gobbled up by offices. The last surviving classroom, used for health science courses, featured a life-sized skeleton model that was trotted out to the lobby each Halloween.

Eventually, it was time for another move and when they went to new quarters at Trinity River in June, MOC employees took, along with boxes containing everything from files to family photos, as many as 38 years of memories.

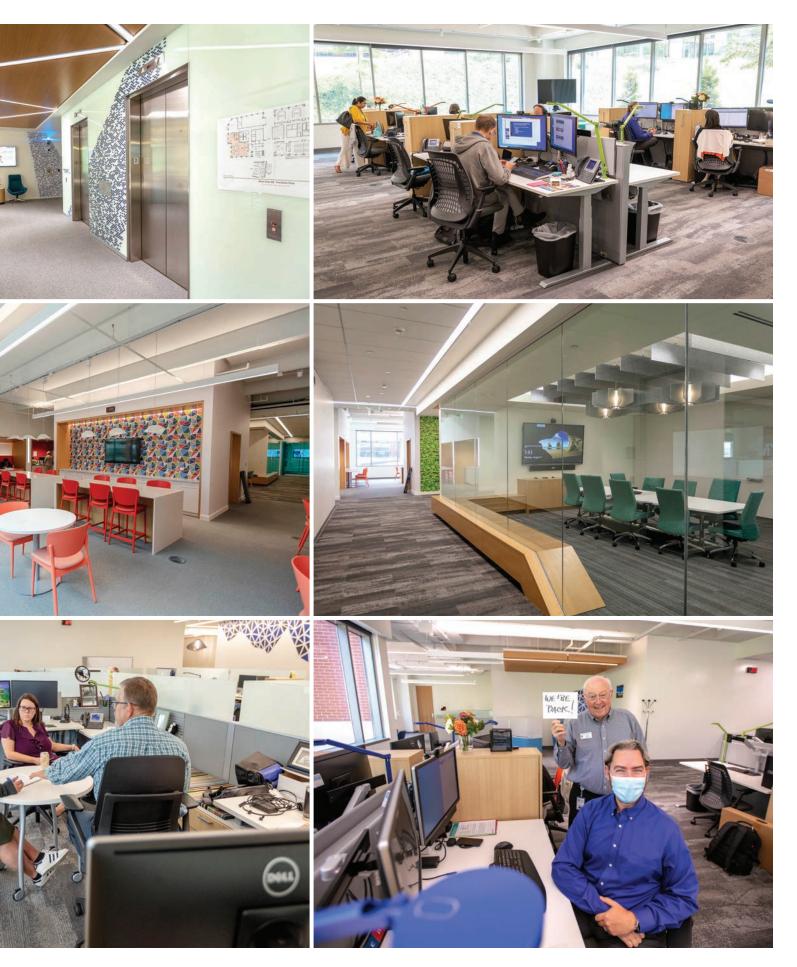
The best part of the MOC, for Chang, was not the building, but what was next to it. "We finally had our own parking lot," she said, "and no longer had to walk for blocks." But there were drawbacks. "We were pretty far away from everything," she said, "too far to go shopping on our lunch hour."

Like Chang, Lynn Tisby in Human Resources was one of the MOC originals and remembers that the standard explanation for a missing document was that it must have been lost in the move. "I think we used that excuse for the first two years," she said.

Since there wasn't much within walking distance, she recalled, brown bags became popular, and people interacted more with one another. "I remember the holidays best," she said. "Business Services would have an open house before Christmas and Human Resources had a big lunch at Thanksgiving. We all depended on each other, came together and became a family."

Now, the family has moved once more, and the collection of memories must start anew.













CC South Dean of Humanities Vicki Ansorge was unsure about collaborative spaces. Open plan offices bring visions of unattractive, cramped cubicles that offer no privacy and are unwelcoming to visitors. Ansorge's thoughts changed after she attended a 2019 tour of the Steelcase Learning + Innovation Center with members of the College's Three Goals and Eight Principles (3G8P) advisory panels. 3G8P is the strategic roadmap TCC uses to guide decisionmaking, ensuring a universal focus on student experience and success.

"What we saw when we toured Steelcase was a dynamic, amazing workplace that had both private and shared spaces so you could work collaboratively or on your own," office one on one," said Sosa. "Yet there's enough privacy to allow those private conversations as needed." Typically, a trip to the dean's office might not bode well for a student, but the TCC South deans are hoping the new area will be a more comfortable space that invites students to interact with campus leaders.

Being in such proximity also empowers the deans to quickly provide visitors with the help they need. If a student comes in to ask a process question, they can be helped by anyone in the office. Dean Sosa was recently able to help a student in Dean Ansorge's area; Sosa supplied an overview of the grade review and appeal processes to a student who wanted to challenge a grade. "Even though Dean Ansorge's

BETTER SERVICE AT TCC SOUTH CREATIVE DESIGN ENHANCES COLLABORATION AND

SERVICE TO STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY. By Hillary Green

said Ansorge. Inspired by that trip, Ansorge and the TCC South deans worked with TCC Real Estate and Facilities to renovate their offices. The deans regularly worked together but wanted to be centrally located to foster further collaboration. The renovation resulted in an innovative and collaborative workspace that redefines how faculty and staff work at TCC.

Workspace Environments, one of TCC's eight principles, developed standards based on industry best practices that shaped the design and decision-making processes for the renovation. Each design decision supports wellbeing, inspires creativity and increases productivity – from mimicking natural light for a peaceful environment to a new façade that welcomes visitors. "I think that kind of deliberate and very careful consideration about how a space will function has made for a better work environment," said Ansorge.

A Welcoming Environment for All

Thomas Sosa, Dean of Mathematics & Natural Sciences at TCC South, notes the importance of employee equity in the design. "It was especially important that we talked with the administrative support staff, because they had perspectives that we didn't," said Sosa. Creating equity in the physical workspaces builds on a culture where all employees are seen as valuable members of the team.

These changes not only create a better workplace for employees but also a welcoming environment where faculty and staff can better serve students and the community. Glass walls and doors offer literal transparency, reducing the intimidation factor for students meeting with a dean. "There is a lot of safety and comfort not being in an enclosed and my areas are vastly different, I was still able to assist since the same process is followed for all students," said

Collaboration Amplified

Sosa.

"Collaborative workspaces have changed the dynamics at TCC by encouraging the removal of barriers and the elimination of silos. Our faculty and staff will be modeling to our students the future of the office space in higher education and beyond," said Workspace Environments Champion and TCC Connect President Carlos Morales.

Through sharing a collaborative space, the TCC South deans have developed consistent processes and communication across different academic departments. For example, end of semester expectations are communicated consistently to each faculty member at TCC South, regardless of which dean they report to. Creating common practices across departments and campuses is critical to ensuring equity for students and staff – no matter what department they belong in, TCC ensures that every student, staff and faculty member have a successful and similar experience.

Design-conscious collaborative spaces are replacing the traditional office floor plan. From enhancing productivity to cultivating employee wellness, this new vision for workspaces fuels creativity while supporting TCC's One College goal.

Visit TCC's Bond Program Updates site, www.tccd.edu/ bond, to learn how TCC's 3G8P framework is guiding design in new campus projects.

What Makes a Great Instructor?

CONNECTING THE DOTS BETWEEN FACULTY EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

By Bill Lace

ong before the first instructor was hired and the first student enrolled, Tarrant County College made a commitment to faculty excellence. Founding Chancellor Joe B. Rushing, in a 1966 newspaper op-ed, put it very simply by writing, "A college *is* its faculty."

But what constitutes excellence and how can one measure it? Dozens of faculty and administrators are working on those questions, and the answers may have a profound impact on how faculty are evaluated, promoted and granted tenure. The vehicle for those answers is the Faculty Framework for Student Success.

The study began in 2018 when the faculty leadership asked the administration to address a matter that had been hanging around for decades, sort of like a squeaky hinge that finally gets so annoying that it gets oiled. At issue was the perceived difficulty of faculty in technical programs, who aren't required to have graduate credit hours and often do not, to be promoted under a system weighted toward advanced academic credentials.

The faculty, said Shereah Taylor of TCC South, were not necessarily looking for a

comprehensive overhaul, but were convinced by Provost Elva LeBlanc that one was needed.

They didn't take much convincing. "The current evaluation instrument really does not speak to what we do," Taylor said. And Kevin Harper from TCC Northeast said, "The way tenure and promotion has worked hasn't changed very much in, like, forever."

Campus administrators didn't need much coaxing either. "The deans, department chairs and everyone have been asking for an updated evaluation process for years," said Lisa Benedetti at TCC Northwest. It's not just that the current process is old, said TCC Trinity River's Thomas Mills, "It's that, moving forward, it really wasn't going to be enough for us to create the culture for student success that we are aiming to produce."

Student success, indeed, was the whole point. "The focus was to recognize the quality and depth of performance and contributions that faculty make to student success," LeBlanc wrote in describing the plan to create the framework. She reasoned that since excellent faculty contribute to that success, such a framework would "connect the dots between faculty success and student outcomes."

The project employed two groups -a core group to begin development of



the quality and depth of performance and contributions that faculty make to student success, connect the dots between faculty success and student outcomes.

Provost Elva LeBlanc

The focus was to recognize

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IDEAL FACULTY MEMBERS SERVE THEIR STUDENTS THROUGH TEACHING EXCELLENCE, SERVE BOTH THE COLLEGE AND THE GREATER COMMUNITY, AND SERVE THEMSELVES THROUGH ADDITIONAL EDUCATION AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY. the framework and an advisory committee to serve as a sounding board, reviewing the core group's work and offering recommendations. There was turnover within the groups over the years to bring more voices to the process.

Core group members first sought to define the mission, roles and responsibilities of the faculty and then, with these in mind, to decide which areas of focus should be the foundation on which to build the framework. Three such areas emerged: teaching/learning, service and inquiry/ scholarship. In other words, ideal faculty members serve their students through teaching excellence, serve both the College and the greater community, and serve themselves through additional education and scholarly activity.

The next task was to identify categories within the three areas:

Teaching/Learning — Expertise and innovation in pedagogy (teaching) and curriculum Service —Institutional engagement (service to the Institution), professional engagement (service to the profession) and community); and engagement (service to the community), and, Inquiry/Scholarship —Scholarship and educational attainment.

Finally, the team would identify activities within these categories and

how faculty could either meet or exceed expectations in each activity.

TCC Southeast Dean Tommy Awtry provided an example. "Take service to the profession," he said. "There's a difference between someone attending a professional organization's conference on one hand and presenting at the conference or helping plan the conference or being an officer in the organization on the other. The first might meet expectations and the others exceed expectations.

"Because of this, we now have a list of what's expected of folks, and I think faculty would appreciate having such a list. It's good for them and good for those who are tasked with evaluating faculty. It lets people know if they're doing their job, if they're doing it really well and maybe if there are things that need to be worked on. The framework allows us to answer those kinds of questions."

The process, while straightforward, was lengthy — by choice. LeBlanc wanted extensive back-and-forth between core group and advisory committee members. She wanted feedback from the faculty at large and in early 2020, took a prototype of the framework on tour, speaking to and taking questions at faculty meetings at all six campuses. "She kind of shared out the work of the group and took the temperature of the faculty to see what their response was," Mills said. "There were a million



different questions pertaining to the direction we took."

"Dr. LeBlanc has done a wonderful job of leading the charge and making sure the faculty have had a voice throughout the process," Benedetti said. "Those meetings were very interactive, and she collected feedback to bring back to the work groups. We took all that and factored it in."

"It was a lot of work and a very powerful way to connect with faculty," LeBlanc said. "The entire experience was very positive and reminded me of the importance of having continuous conversations with faculty."

The latest version of the framework came out in April 2021. It contains 19 expectations and 46 ways in which they might be met. It even addresses the question of promotion for technical program faculty that set everything in motion. Graduate work and advanced degrees are still mandated and in the same quantity, but other doctoral programs are recognized besides those in the teaching field. It's what Harper called "a tall ask" for someone who has no graduate credits, but, as Harper said, "It's still an improved pathway."

No one expects a faculty member to exceed expectations in every category or even make the attempt. "Of course, you're going to be stronger in some areas than in others," Awtry said. "Your strength might be in teaching and not in professional development, but I think that what we have in the 'meets expectations' column applies to everyone."

This framework likely will not be the final one. Discussions still occur and other aspects of faculty work may pop up in the future, but it's sufficient for the next stage to begin, which is how the new tool is to be put to use. That effort began in May and will result in a new process for faculty evaluation.

"We're going to dig into the evaluation process, moving it from the framework to the tool," said Benedetti, who is on one of the reconstituted work groups. "My understanding from our first meeting is that we hope to have the completed recommendation by next summer."

Everything that has been done or will be done takes its inspiration from the Three Goals and Eight Principles, or 3G8P, that provide guidance for every phase of college life. "Over the years I have learned that people perform best when they are happy, have positive views of the organization, its people, and are motivated by the work itself," LeBlanc said. "So, what motivates TCC faculty and staff? Students! And the Three Goals and Eight Principles also focus on students."

And when people's governing philosophy aligns with their motivations, it makes those dots all the easier to connect. EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN DONE OR WILL BE DONE TAKES ITS INSPIRATION FROM THE THREE GOALS AND EIGHT PRINCIPLES, OR 3G8P, THAT PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR EVERY PHASE OF COLLEGE LIFE.

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

TCC'S JOINT CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (JCC) PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY MEMBERS TO DRIVE CHANGE

By Bill Lace

he founding faculty of what was in 1967 Tarrant County Junior College was a rather feisty bunch, and one of those rowdies was Gary Smith, then a biology teacher and now retired as vice president for academic affairs at TCC Northeast.

"I was in my 20s," he said many years later. "And if you think I'm foolish now, you should have seen me then."

Chancellor Joe B. Rushing, for all his meticulous planning, had made no provision for any kind of faculty organization, so Smith and some cohorts up and started one — the Faculty Association.

"The day we started it, all the administrators were off campus, and they thought we were trying to stage some sort of coup d'état," Smith said. "We didn't even know they were gone. We were just trying to find a time in the schedule to meet."

There was plenty to talk about — sticky topics like academic freedom and faculty tenure. "It was getting pretty contentious," Smith said, "and Dr. Rushing told us one time, 'I've been staying up late worrying about the faculty and this Faculty Association thing, and I've finally figured out that I have better lawyers than you do, so I'm not worried about anything."

Rushing realized, Smith said, that such an organization was needed, provided it stayed in the framework of the College, rather than in a faculty union. The result was the Joint Consultation Committee or JCC, recognized publicly as "the official channel of communication and consultation between the faculty and the administration." It consists of two representatives from each campus, plus a chairperson.

Smith said at first, discussions were sometimes "bare knuckles. Maybe it was like the two-year-old who's ready to pull away from the hand of the parent. We were young and trying to find out how we all fit together and what parts each of us played in the organization. But it (JCC) eventually became institutionalized."

While the JCC could make recommendations and attend Board of Trustees meetings, however, there was no system for regular consultations to take place. David Clinkscale, now retired, but who served two campuses as a JCC member in different decades, said communications were "more informal, more of an as-needed thing."

Change, when and if it occurred, was glacial. "It has been an exceedingly slow process," said TCC South's Robbie Sheffy, "and any successes achieved were always a function of the personality of the chancellor and his/her willingness to acknowledge the value of having a relationship with faculty."

However slow and infrequent, though, the JCC has effected some lasting changes, such as an increase in payments to all employees for supplemental health insurance, boosts in adjunct faculty pay, and reimbursement for faculty required to take continuing education courses, such as nurses. It also played a large role in the implementation of the TCC Plus





HOWEVER SLOW AND INFREQUENT, THOUGH, THE JCC HAS EFFECTED SOME LASTING CHANGES, SUCH AS AN INCREASE IN PAYMENTS TO ALL EMPLOYEES FOR SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH INSURANCE, BOOSTS IN ADJUNCT FACULTY PAY, AND REIMBURSEMENT FOR FACULTY REQUIRED TO TAKE CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES, SUCH AS NURSES. IT ALSO PLAYED A LARGE ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TCC PLUS TEXTBOOK PROGRAM. textbook program.

More recently, a JCC recommendation triggered the current study to overhaul the faculty evaluation process, and it worked to expand the pathway to promotion for technical program faculty. One of the recommendations still in the pipeline concerns paternity leave.

The JCC finally got a seat at the table in 1997 with the appointment of Chancellor Leonardo de la Garza, only it was more like the children's table at a family Thanksgiving. The Chancellor's Executive Leadership Team (CELT), as the Cabinet was then known, met behind closed doors, occupying chairs at one end of a large rectangle. After the CELT-only agenda was finished, JCC members were admitted and took seats at the far end of the rectangle. "We were at the back of the room and generally were silent until spoken to," Sheffy said. "The chancellor talked to us, but it was sort of a father-knows-best kind of thing."

De la Garza's successor, Erma Johnson Hadley, understood the optics of this "us vs. them" arrangement and shook things up at her first meeting, directing the campus presidents to sit alongside their respective JCC members. The JCC chair, she had decided, would sit beside her.

"Erma scared the ever-loving dickens out of me," the now-retired John Crawford said. "There was an empty chair beside her. She hollers at me and says, 'John, you come up here. This is your seat now."

Crawford and his colleagues soon discovered that the new arrangement was much more than window dressing. "When she [Hadley] had questions about whatever we were discussing, she'd lean over and ask me," he said. "All of a sudden we were involved in the budget process, involved in a lot of the decisionmaking.

"We went before the Board and made presentations, which to my knowledge had never occurred. It became a more interactive, congenial atmosphere and a way to communicate with upper administration."

Although the JCC was involved in decisions, it still was as a junior partner, and Hadley's decisions on hot-button issues sometimes seemed autocratic to some faculty members. When Eugene Giovannini was chosen as her successor, Shereah Taylor, representing TCC South on the JCC, wondered if it would bring a change. Did it ever!

The initial gust of fresh air came when Giovannini first met with the entire JCC. Following custom, President Steve Smiley served as spokesman, asking all the questions, or trying to. "At the third question he (Giovannini) held up his hand and said, 'Stop,'' Taylor recalled. "He said, 'There are 13 of you in this room and one person asking questions." Told it was custom, the new chancellor promptly authored a new custom. From now on, the person with the question would do the asking.

That was just for openers. As the fall 2016 term began, Smiley and President-elect Taylor were asked to attend a meeting with the Chancellor and Cabinet. "True to form," said Taylor, "we sat there with our hands folded. Then Dr. Giovannini said, 'You'll notice that the chair and chair-elect of the JCC are here, and they're not just attending the meeting. They are now members of the Cabinet."

That was big news to Smiley, Taylor and the entire faculty. "We were asked to make decisions, to drive change," Taylor said. "It was weird for us and also very different for the faculty back on the campuses. Instead of reporting back to our constituency on what *might* happen, now, it *was* what was going to happen. And not only that, but it was *what* was going to happen and *why*. He had completely changed the culture of faculty and administration."

The incorporation of faculty into the College's administrative process didn't stop at the JCC level. Chairs of committees drafting portions of the faculty's annual proposal to the administration found themselves meeting with Giovannini and being questioned. They also found themselves working directly with the top administrators charged with carrying out the approved proposals.

Including the JCC leaders in the Cabinet came with a cost, requiring much more time and a large dose of responsibility. They meet twice monthly with Giovannini; one of those meetings including Provost Elva LeBlanc. The sessions are frank, sometimes including matters that are not to leave the room. "Sometimes you have to do that because I think it gets a greater buy-in to know that there are no secrets," Giovannini said.

That trust is taken very seriously by the JCC leaders. "We would have meetings on campus where you knew some of the information others were talking about, but it wasn't your place to divulge it," said TCC Northeast's Kevin Harper, JCC chair in 2018. "Sometimes it was a little bit hard for you to hold your tongue, but not really, because you don't want to lose that trust."

This sea change in the faculty-administration paradigm was not for show. TCC has discovered that Eugene Giovannini doesn't do show. He was acting on his view that governance is not just the Board of Trustees or the policy manual or about things like academic freedom. Instead, he said, "Governing the institution is about governing the work of the institution. It's inclusive engagement of the stakeholders in the work of the institution, one of which obviously being the JCC."

What constitutes the work of the institution was clarified with months of introspection leading to TCC's Three Goals and Eight Principles (3G8P), for which hundreds of faculty and staff are now hammering out recommendations for implementation. These, Giovannini said, "are the fundamental work of how we exist every single day. You need people participating and being involved, engaged in doing that work every day. So, in my view, those people, the front-line workers engaged in the Principles work, that is governance."

It's taken some time, Harper said, for the faculty to begin to accept this new reality, that this is different from some of the previous initiatives *du jour* that have left them jaded. "He (Giovannini) lets everyone know that this is the way the College does business," he said. "It's the way we do things now. A lot of faculty members want to become members of the Principles' advisory panels because they realize that's where decisions are going to be made."

The JCC and its leaders might take occasional guidance from Giovannini, but not instructions. "This is not me telling them what to do," he said. "This is me saying, 'Hey, this is what the expectation is for you to be at the table as a full player. You carry the faculty voice, the input around the faculty perspective on things. And it's now your obligation and responsibility to take those things back to them."

Are the faculty listening? Some, Smiley said, but getting faculty to understand what he called "the business of the College" can be frustrating when many don't look beyond their campuses. "The Chancellor's One College focus will make a better college for Tarrant County," he said, "but it needs communication to overcome 50 years of entrenched campus-first mentality."

Creating a Districtwide, ongoing faculty-administration dialogue is crucial, he said, adding that it's the JCC that serves "the important purpose of bringing the two viewpoints together.

Taylor said too few of the faculty are engaged in Giovannini's inclusive notion of governance. "We have, what, almost 200 fulltime faculty members (on her campus) and we might have 40 show up for a meeting," she said. "But when we have ownership of the work that is going on, that's going to change. I definitely believe we're in a time of change where it's not us vs. them any longer, but a collective effort."

2021-22 Joint Consultation Committee (JCC)

The JCC is made up of a chair, who does not represent a specific campus, and the presidents and presidentselect of the six campus faculty associations (FA). One of the Faculty Association presidents also serves as chair-elect of the JCC.

JCC Chair - Mike Downs (Southeast)

FA President and JCC Chair-elect – Tia Cole (South)

FA President-elect – Michael Jackson (South)

FA President – Stephanie Hawkins (Southeast)

FA President-elect – Monica Escobar-LeBlanc (Southeast)

FA President – Michelle York (Northwest)

FA President-elect - Kathleen Galindo (Northwest)

FA President- Rosa Mendez (Northeast)

FA President-elect – Shewanda Riley (Northeast)

FA President - Angela Thurman (Connect)

FA President-elect - Allegra Davis (Connect)

FA President – Christine Blevins (Trinity River)

FA President-elect – De'Leon Addison (Trinity River)

ESTABLISHED 35 YEARS AGO, THE CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXEMPLARY TEACHING RECOGNIZES FACULTY WHO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR THEIR STUDENTS

By Bill Lace



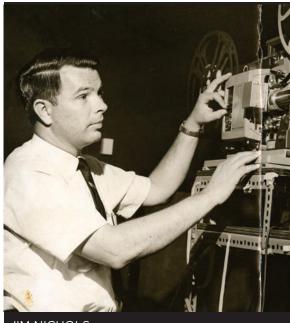
RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

In his 1966 planning document, founding Chancellor Joe B. Rushing wrote that Tarrant County Junior College (as it was then) would "identify and reward excellence in teaching." Twenty years later, that promise took substantive form with the establishment of the Chancellor's Award for Exemplary Teaching, now celebrating its 35th anniversary.

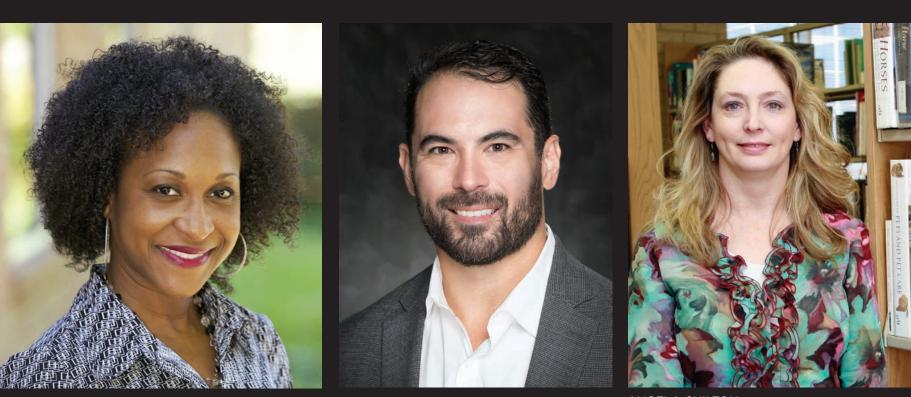
"Success in teaching has been achieved by many, and the work of some is marked by excellence," Rushing said when announcing the award. "It is my feeling that the College should have its own system to recognize those who have demonstrated the highest levels of excellence in teaching."

Campuses were to submit nominations, after which a panel of faculty members would select one honoree from each campus. Winners would receive a plaque and a check for \$2,500.

The first-year recipients in 1986 were Jim Nichols from TCC South, Gary Smith from Northeast and Mike Cinatl, then at Northwest and now the recently retired assistant to the president at Southeast. Between them and this year's recipients (see accompanying article) are another 112 faculty who have heard their names announced at Commencement Ceremonies in the spring or at Chancellor's Breakfasts in the fall. They included two future campus presidents, Tahita Fulkerson



JIM NICHOLS



YOLANDA PARKER

THOMAS SOSA

ANGELA CHILTON

and Elva LeBlanc, and about a dozen deans and vice presidents.

While the checks came in handy and the plaques looked nice on office walls, it was the intrinsic rewards, past winners say, that carried the most meaning. Often, the most cherished aspect was that it came from fellow faculty. "I was deeply moved by the support of other faculty members who insisted I submit my portfolio because, from their lens, my work met the criteria for the award," said LeBlanc (Northeast, 1987). "I have always been passionate about the work I do and being recognized by colleagues for the work that I love was a huge thrill."

The award was a goal aspired to by Yolanda Parker (South, 2017) but not actively sought. "I didn't approach my administrators saying, 'I want to go up for this." she said. "They approached me, and every year they approach someone who they feel they want to put forward. That made it all the more meaningful because not only did my administrators notice something in me, but my colleagues - other faculty were rooting for me, and that meant a lot.

Some recipients, like Thomas Sosa (Northwest, 2017), saw the award as emblematic of the overall

quality of TCC faculty. "Here's what I'll say about the other (campus) nominees and about other people in our department. They're amazing," he said. "And I think that really drives us all to be better – not better than one another, but we all have really high standards of excellence. And I think that seeing these other people and how good they are, mimicking what they do ... it can't help but rub off."

Angela Chilton (Northwest, 2020) also emphasized the award's exemplary aspect. "As long as I've been full-time with TCC, I looked to the Chancellor's Award as a goal. Not to win it or even be nominated, but to use its criteria to point the way toward excellence. And it also helps me find mentors, to find the people who've won it and then just talk to them to find a pathway to excellence."

David Clinkscale (South, 2000) found the award a challenge to do even better. "It made me realize that I was in the company of some magnificent teachers and that I thus had a lofty standard of excellence to which I needed to hold myself accountable," he said. "It certainly helped me ward off complacency and make sure that I always gave my very best to my students."

Lindsey Davis (South, 2019) held up her own



GARY SMITH AND DAVID CLINKSCALE

PETER JORDAN, LINDSEY DAVIS AND CHANCELLOR EUGENE GIOVANNINI

specific standard of excellence — Clinkscale. "He's that caliber of professor who is just whip smart, who doesn't lower his standards for his students," she said. "He used to say, 'This is not a feel-good emporium. We're here to learn and not to get participation trophies.' His students loved him and probably loved that he wasn't going to let them slack off."

But Davis was most touched and heartened by comments from former students. She admits she doesn't always read end-of-semester evaluations but was required to review them to compile part of the nomination portfolio. "I couldn't look just here and there. It was the entire gamut," she said. "I cried so many happy tears."

It wasn't the A-grade students who tugged at her heart, but the ones who admitted they'd always done poorly in English and were dreading the class but found Lindsey a game changer. "My number one goal is building their confidence after they've been told or believe at some point that they can't — can't understand poetry, can't write an essay," she said. "And, lo and behold, they find that they can."

The men and women who have won the Chancellor's Award come from a wide array of backgrounds. Some have sought and gained tenure; others are happy as instructors. They've taught biology, speech, dance, construction, hospitality management, French, dietetics, philosophy, aviation maintenance and just about every other course TCC offers. Some move on to administration; others prefer the classroom. The common denominators are a passion for teaching and a steadfast dedication to making their students successful.

"

Success in teaching has been achieved by many, and the work of some is marked by excellence. It is my feeling that the College should have its own system to recognize those who have demonstrated the highest levels of excellence in teaching.

Joe B. Rushing founding Chancellor, Tarrant County Junior College

CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXEMPLARY

The Chancellor's Award for Exemplary Teaching is awarded to TCC faculty members who demonstrate the instructional excellence that helps students succeed. Candidate consideration also includes service to the College and the community and research and publication. The 2021-2022 recipients of the awards are as follows. All information is from each candidate's nomination packet. The 2021-2022 recipients of the awards are as follows. All information is from each candidate's nomination packet.



Jason Frawley Professor of History TCC Northwest

Jason Frawley brings his scholarly credentials and years of teaching experience to the classroom. He cultivates curiosity and a commitment to learning in his students. He brings history to life with in-depth stories of major events that have occurred in history as well as current-day events that have an impact on our world today. He is keenly aware of uncomfortable moments in history and when his students express concerns, he provides the reassurance needed to think critically and openly about them.

Frawley continues to pursue his passion for Civil War studies, writing, speaking and contributing to this field of study. Whenever called upon to serve, he steps forward with commitment and determination. He is always attentive in the many roles he serves as professor, leader, mentor and scholar. He has taught at TCC for more than 16 years.



A'Isha Malone Instructor of Speech TCC Northeast

A'Isha Malone is highly focused on student success and support. She believes that for students to be successful, instructors must be sensitive to individual student's needs while maintaining high academic standards. "I must be creative and flexible in both my instructional approach and planning. To accommodate a variety of learning styles, it is often necessary to alter classroom activities; however, students must not lose sight of the fundamental concepts being taught," says Malone. She has taught at TCC for more than 16 years.

She also emphasizes servicelearning through volunteer work at local community organizations. She is a certified service-learning specialist who co-created current TCC service-learning materials.

She also is committed to research and educational experiences regarding Equity and Inclusion. She loves to share her knowledge from extensive training, conferences and workshops with students, faculty and staff.



Johansen Quijano Associate Professor of English TCC Trinity River

Johansen Quijano has taught courses on writing, rhetoric, literature, critical thinking, writing and games and social media at TCC for more than five years. "What fulfills me as an educator is when students who were insecure about their writing tell me that my class helped them. Those student success stories are what motivate me," says Quijano.

Quijano also has published book chapters on maker culture and the use of games in the classroom for learning. He works with various organizations to host video game related events to raise awareness of various causes, including mental health, social isolation, personal disenfranchisement and how games can help in improving the conditions of members of the community.

TEACHING 2021-2022 By Gina Brasseur

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2021-2022 CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS FOR EXEMPLARY TEACHING WINNERS.



Misty Wilson-Mehrtens Assistant Professor of History TCC Connect

Misty Wilson-Mehrtens has taught for more than 12 years at Tarrant County College. She consistently proves her commitment to student success both in her efforts in the classroom and in her willingness to lead or organize student success efforts outside the classroom. As a former TCC student herself, Wilson-Mehrtens now serves as the Social Sciences Department Chair and is the advisor for Phi Theta Kappa, both at TCC Connect.

Her style of teaching involves going beyond memorizing dates and events. Rather, history is brought to life with active engagement, presentations, music, documentaries or news articles. As one student wrote in a class feedback form, "I have never been a big fan of history, but this was genuinely my favorite history class I have ever taken".



Jeffrey Herr Associate Professor of Education and Philosophy TCC South

Jeffrey Herr is an associate professor of education and philosophy at TCC South. The student appraisals he often receives at the end of each term reflect his skills as an outstanding instructor. Students praise him for not only being extremely knowledgeable in his field, but also in his ability to engage and challenge students. He often facilitates whole-class dilemma conversations which lead students toward critical conversations and creative understandings. Many students often seek out his classes because he is a role model of the type of teacher they aspire to be.

Herr was twice selected as Educator of the Year during his 22 years as a middle and high school teacher.



Karl "Des" Robinson Associate Professor of Psychology TCC Southeast

Des Robinson is in his 21st year teaching at Tarrant County College. He has a passion for evidence-based teaching and learning. (Evidence-based learning is education based on scientific evidence rather than tradition or other outside influences.) As one co-worker commented, "Mr. Robinson is an excellent instructor. He finds ways to teach the material in innovative ways, including interactive presentations that have creative ways of relaying the information to students."

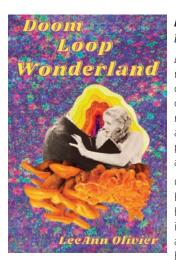
Robinson also is chair of the Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences at TCC Southeast. As such, he oversees faculty, staff and student workers in the department.



TEACHING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

At TCC, faculty members do more than teach in the classroom. Every day, everywhere, they impact the lives of those around them. Here is a small list of faculty accomplishments as they serve the community in Tarrant County and beyond.

TOP SHELF



Doom Loop Wonderland by LeeAnn Olivier, MFA

Doom Loop Wonderland is a micro memoir that tells the story of domestic violence, addiction and clawing toward freedom. Olivier recounts her experience with abuse and self-reclamation with a poignant clarity that lingers long after the reader devour its pages.

Olivier teaches English and Humanities at TCC. Her writings have appeared in several journals, including Infection House, Parhelion and Driftwood Press. She lives with her husband, his two teenagers and a menagerie of rescued animals.

Be Successful in America

Teilow in Your Wey to Teach Ferninge and measuring perspectives on philosophies and values on education⁴ Anel Herrera & Angel L. Hidalgo



Be Successful in America Believe in Your Way to Teach:

Feminine and Masculine Perspectives on Philosophies and Vision on Education *by Anel Herrera and Angel L Hidalgo*

by Aner Herrera and Anger L Hudago

A teacher must measure their success as a merchant who achieves triumph when they sell their product to the customer. Who buys the product from the teacher? The student.

Anel Herrera and Angel Hidalgo share their experiences in the education system from their feminine and masculine perspectives. Herrera is an instructional associate and Hidalgo is an assistant professor of Spanish, both at TCC Southeast.



HORROR IN THE AGE OF STEAM TALES OF TERROR IN THE VICTORIAN AGE OF TRANSITIONS





Horror in the Age of Steam

Tales of Terror in the Victorian Age of Transitions

by Carroll Clayton Savant, PhD

Rapid change is destabilizing. Wholesale swaths of England's economy and the social structure underwent complete recalibration under Queen Victoria. Faced with such change, Britons had to redefine the concept of work, belief and even what it meant to be English.

Carroll Clayton Savant is an associate professor of English at TCC. He has written extensively on music and literature in Victorian society. He is a trained musicologist with a background as a concert pianist and orchestral musician.

The Texas Experience: Lone Star Politics, Policy, and Participation

by Paul Benson and Anthony Giardino

This book brings the fast-paced, ever-changing world of Texas law, leadership and politics to life. It is designed to help the next generation of Texas voters be informed, educated, and civically engaged. From Lyndon Johnson to the Bush Dynasty to the events that are unfolding today, Texas has literally defined American government.

GET ON BOARD

Rosa Mendez, department chair of child development & education at TCC Northeast, was appointed as **Mayor Pro Tem** in Westworth Village and as Chair for the **Golf & Parks Committee**, also in Westworth Village.

Angel Ayala, veterans counselor at TCC Trinity River, has been selected as president-elect for the Fort Worth Board of the **Texas Association of Addiction Professionals**.

A'Isha Malone, speech instructor and department chair at TCC Northeast, has been invited to serve on the Board of Directors for **HEB ISD Education Foundation**.

Adrian Riojas, coordinator of special services for Advising & Counseling at TCC Trinity River, has been elected treasurer for the **Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE)** board.

WE PRESENT TO YOU

Dena Berg, associate professor of biology at TCC Northwest, presented "Teaching Lab Sciences in a Global Pandemic: What Have we Learned?" at the **American Society for Microbiology**, Texas Branch meeting. Berga was joined by Deb Scheiwe, assistant professor of biology from TCC Northeast and Kristina Miranda, instructor of biology at TCC South.

Alejandro Garza, assistant professor of Spanish at TCC Northwest, gave a talk and workshop to the **Tamayo Institute, Oaxaca Cultural Center** about the art of photography as a tool for cultural, global awareness and educational purposes. The talk is in Spanish and can be viewed on YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geqYnWbAWt8

TCC Southeast President **Bill Coppola** spoke to the **Leadership Arlington Youth and Adult** classes about the importance of education in Arlington.

Osaro Airen, counselor at TCC Trinity River, presented "How Academic Journals/Publications Can Lead to Impactful Discussions About Diversity and Social Justice" at the **Texas Association of Black School Educators/Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education** joint virtual conference. **Greta Bowling**, professor of biology at TCC Northwest, presented at a meeting of the **American Association of University Women** on the theme of "Building Ties" to teach members how to connect with the environment.

Amy Gilley, dean of humanities at TCC Trinity River, presented original poetry, "Experiments After Creeley" at the **Northeast Modern Language Association** annual convention. Jerrica Jordan, associate professor of English at TCC Trinity River, presented a paper, "#MeToo Rhetoric in Ann Petry's The Street" at the same event.

Three TCC Connect faculty and staff presented at the **Instructional Technology Council** 2021 virtual conference. **Angela Thurman** presented "OpenStax: OER Adoption and Implementation", **Allegra Davis-Hannah** presented "Leading Transition to a new Learning Management System" and **Cristina Sullivan** presented "Empowering Yourself to Empower Others: Self-Awareness and Growth in a Leadership Role".

Laura Matysek Wood, professor of history and government at TCC Northwest, presented at the International Virtual Exchange (IVE) Conference on the topic of "Effective Student Virtual Exchanges Through linkreducation.com". IVE provides for collaboration in an individual course between students at different colleges in different countries during a semester.

Mike Vendsel, professor of philosophy at TCC Southeast, gave the keynote address "Spiritual Sight from St. Augustine to Jean-Luc Marion" at **The Gordon H. Clark Philosophy Symposium**. The symposium is an opportunity for philosophy students to participate in an academic conference alongside professional philosophers.

EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE, OUR FACULTY IMPACT THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND THEM THROUGH THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS THEY SERVE THE COMMUNITY IN TARRANT COUNTY AND BEYOND.

WIDENING THE COLLEGE PIPELINE

EXPANDED DUAL CREDIT HELPS MORE STUDENTS SAVE TIME AND MONEY WHILE PROMOTING CONTINUED COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

By Alexis Patterson

5,479,173. That's how many Texas children are enrolled in public schools, according to the most recently available data. That's a lot of kids – a full 28 U.S. states don't have entire populations that large. Of course, traditional public schools aren't the only way young students are getting educated. Homeschooling, private schools and open-enrollment charter campuses are among the options that account for a significant number of students – and all of those students deserve to be on the pathway to higher education.

For decades, Tarrant County College has worked with regional independent school districts to offer dual credit programs; TCC more recently has established early college high schools and Pathway to Technology (P-Tech) sites. All provide students the ability to earn college credit before high school graduation. In the case of TCC's 13 early college high schools — including five located on the College's physical campuses — there is no cost to students, and they begin college-level work as early as ninth grade. That allows them to earn up to 60 college hours and an associate degree by the time they finish 12th grade. P-Tech sites across Tarrant County offer similar no-cost programs for technical careers. Dual credit opportunities, meanwhile, are even more widespread and allow high school juniors and seniors to take individual TCC classes that also meet high school graduation requirements.

"It's about the continuum of education," explains Bill Coppola, president of TCC Southeast and champion of the High School Principle, part of TCC's guiding vision of Three Goals and Eight Principles. "Students can't wait to think about college until spring of their senior year of high school. What we want to do is get into our schools and the community and get students on a college-going track as early as we can."

While independent school districts do educate the majority of students, TCC is expanding its programs to bring credit-earning opportunities to even more local high schoolers and deepen the area's college-going culture. To that end, the College is formally partnering with home school families and organizations, charter schools and private schools.

Students can't wait to think about college until spring of their senior year of high school. What we want to do is get into our schools and the community and get students on a college-going track as early as we can. **Bill Coppola**,

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President of TCC Southeast

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MORE STUDENTS THAN EVER ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TCC DUAL CREDIT COURSES; DUAL CREDIT COMPRISES A FULL 20 PERCENT OF THE COLLEGE'S ENROLLMENT. THAT INCLUDES ABOUT 2,000 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS AND ANOTHER 6,000 IN OTHER DUAL CREDIT PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC CAMPUSES, PRIVATE SCHOOLS, OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTERS AND HOME SCHOOLS.

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"Before that, parents just dropped the students off on campus when they were juniors or seniors to take classes," Coppola says. "That was particularly true for advanced courses such as calculus, biology and physics, where we could provide labs students wouldn't be able to access at home or perhaps at a smaller school."

Fellowship Academy in Kennedale is one of the private schools that works with TCC to offer dual credit coursework to its students. Chase James, a Fellowship Academy senior, has already accumulated credit for college algebra, English and history. His mom, Liz MacDonnell, says dual credit was an easy choice.

"We are able to pay for the college classes now, out of pocket, without disrupting our financial planning for his four-year degree," MacDonnell states. "And Chase is able to learn self-discipline for college classes and the type of

expectations college professors have."

That's exactly what drove Fellowship Academy to partner with TCC. Just like any public school, "we wanted to provide our students the opportunity to challenge themselves academically while earning college credits at the same time," says Beatrice Jurik, the secondary assistant principal and director of college and career at Fellowship Academy.



for example, would have access to dramatically more affordable tuition — \$64 per semester hour, versus the out-of-district Texas county rate of \$126.

The Board's decision closes an equity gap and brings more students into the dual credit program, which is connected to ongoing success in education. "We know that if a student takes up to 12 hours of dual credit, they have a 100 percent chance of graduating high school and going on to postsecondary education," Coppola shares.

More students than ever are taking advantage of TCC dual credit courses; dual credit comprises a full 20 percent of the College's enrollment. That includes about 2,000 students enrolled in early college high schools and another 6,000 in other dual credit programs at public campuses, private schools, open-enrollment charters and home schools.

CHASE JAMES, A FELLOWSHIP ACADEMY SENIOR, HAS ALREADY ACCUMULATED CREDIT FOR COLLEGE ALGEBRA, ENGLISH AND HISTORY. HIS MOM, LIZ MACDONNELL, SAYS DUAL CREDIT WAS AN EASY CHOICE.

In all dual credit opportunities, high school students are subject to the same level of rigor and responsibility as any other TCC student; college faculty teach the classes. and students have access to the full range of support services. Dual credit students have the opportunity to continue their studies at TCC after high school graduation or transfer the credit they earned to

TCC now has official agreements with five charter schools and four private campuses, as well as with home school organizations and 17 school districts. In spring 2021, the TCC Board of Trustees approved a recommendation that all dual credit students, regardless of their home address, would pay the lower, in-District tuition levels based on the in-TCC-District status of their local school district. That means home schoolers who live in Johnson County but are part of Mansfield ISD, virtually any state college or university as well as many private schools.

Chase plans to transfer his credits to the University of Texas at Arlington, where he will study physics, biochemistry or biophysics. His mother is happy that he's already a few classes closer to earning his degree thanks to TCC — a benefit she personally understands.

"I went to TCC when I started my college degree years ago," MacDonnell says. "I am a proponent of getting a jump on your college education."

To learn more about TCC's commitment to build the higher education pipeline and provide accelerated opportunities and find information about the College's other goals and principles, visit www.tccd.edu/CollegeGoals.

Coming Full Circle

ARLINGTON COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE RETURNS TO HER ALMA MATER TO LAUNCH HER TEACHING CAREER

By Bill Lace

n August 2014, Leslie Ramirez walked into Arlington Collegiate High School (ACHS), the brand-new early college high school on the TCC Southeast campus, as a ninth grader. She was very excited and a little bit apprehensive.

In August 2021, Leslie Ramirez walked into the same building, this time as a brand-new English teacher. She was very excited and a little bit apprehensive.

"It's very much the same but different at the same time," she said. "I was as nervous as any first-time teacher would be, but the support here never stops. The other teachers are always checking on me, asking if I need any help. So, it feels almost like I never left."

Applying for ACHS was a hard decision. She ordinarily would have started at Martin High School and wanted to be a cheerleader. But cheerleader tryouts and the deadline for ACHS application were the same day. Her friends implored her to choose Martin, she said, "but something told me this is where I belonged. It was the best decision I could have made."

While it may seem as if she never left, she did, as a member of ACHS's first graduating class in 2018. Armed with her high school diploma and TCC degree, she progressed to the University of North Texas.

According to her instructors, Ramirez was a model student with a laser focus on the future. "She knew she wanted to be a teacher when she was in high school," said Jennifer Fuller, who taught her English in ninth and tenth grades. "Once she made up her mind, it was full steam ahead. She's incredibly hard working."

That full head of steam powered her to a bachelor's degree in English in a single year, thanks to her TCC degree. The master's in education took two years, and it would have been sooner had COVID not postponed her practice teaching.

"Oh, man, she was just very driven," said Julia Mims, another former teacher. "I mean, she's 21 and already has her master's degree. Everything she did, she wanted to be done well and whatever she puts her mind to, she is going to get there one way or another."

Last spring, before leaving UNT, Ramirez began to

explore the job market and wrote about her search on social media. Good thing, because Fuller spotted her post. "I knew we would have an opening," Fuller said, "so I said, 'Hey, I don't know if you'd want to come here, but if you're interested you should contact the principal.' We were just thrilled. We English teachers absolutely loved the idea of her being here and getting to work with her."

Ramirez absolutely loved the idea, as well, but there was a niggling worry. Her former teachers and the faculty were excited, she said, but Principal Jeff Krieger, in an initial interview, seemed a bit doubtful that coming to teach where one had been a student only four years ago was a good idea. "He had every right to be skeptical," she said, "and I told him, 'I want what's best for the students. And if that's me, put me in and I will give it my all. If not, I'll understand and there are no hard feelings."

But on May 4, four days after her UNT graduation, she received a call from Krieger asking her to come in for another interview. "And he offered me the job that day," she said. Her immediate reaction was a spell of nervous laughter, after which she apologized, saying she had been taken by surprise and hadn't known what to expect. "Everybody's sure about you," Krieger said, "and I am, too."

She was hesitant to tell her classes that she was a former student. "I went back and forth on that," she said, "but I spoke to the principal and teachers and we all kind of agreed that maybe it would be a good thing and might help motivate them (her students)."

Good choice. She has been peppered with questions, not only from her freshman students, but also from sophomores, juniors and even seniors, all wanting to know what to expect, what they should do later in high school and even in college. "They're asking me the questions I was hoping they'd ask," she said, "what they can do to be successful. I give them all the information I can. I tell them, 'I didn't just come here and fly through. It was hard, but if you reach out to us (the faculty) and use the support and resources you have here, you will be successful.""

Mims called Ramirez' situation "kind of a weird paradox. She was looking at the school through a student's I just love education, and when you have good teachers who are passionate, you create a system where you can't fail. We want our kids to be as successful as possible, and that's my dream — for everyone to have that opportunity. Leslie Ramirez

lens and now she's a teacher. But she absolutely can commiserate with them far more than anyone else. She'll have instant connections with them, and I think she has the ability and potential to resonate."

Fuller sees it from a slightly different angle. "As teachers we think we know what works for kids," she said, "but she can actually tell us what might not work as well as we think and give her perspective as a student. It's really incredible seeing her work with her students and support them."

While Mims and Fuller both remember her as "driven," Ramirez says that, no, it's just that she likes to have a plan a 10-year plan that starts anew each year. The plan currently includes teaching a few years, earning her certification to be a principal or assistant principal and then getting her doctorate in educational leadership with an eye to becoming a school district administrator.

"Then, I just want to keep going," she said. "I just love education, and when you have good teachers who are passionate, you create a system where you can't fail. We want our kids to be as successful as possible, and that's my dream — for everyone to have that opportunity."

All that, however, is down the road, the section of which now confronting her is having the same kind of hurdles everyone faces in the first job of a career. But she has plenty of coaching to surmount them. It's almost like she's a chick with multiple mother hens. Mims even changed classrooms so as to be next door. "We want to support her as best we can," Fuller said. "We are definitely going to check in with her but not overwhelm her with help."

And Ramirez is glad of that help. "I was so nervous the first day," she said. "You realize all the little details you may be paying not enough attention or too much attention to. But people would come in and, when I told them how it went, would say, 'You did good – really good."

She is happy with her role as teacher, adviser and confidant, wanting her students to see her as someone who understands both sides of the teacher-student coin. "And I also hope that I might somehow show them what's possible," she said. "I'm young. I've done a lot and matured a lot. I've gotten to a good position. I earned it at a young age, but they can do that, too, if they really try."

Learn more about TCC's early college high schools: www.tccd.edu/ECHS

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL

WHILE TECHNOLOGY IS UNDOUBTEDLY AN ASSET TO COMMUNICATION, FACE-TO-FACE DIALOGUE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT

By Murray Fortner

ne day while in the checkout line at the grocery store, the gentleman behind me saw that I was wearing a University of Kentucky sweatshirt. I told him that I attended UK. We engaged in an interesting conversation about basketball until it was almost my turn to check out. Unexpectedly, he asked my name. I don't know why, but I gave him my complete name. Upon hearing "Fortner," which is an uncommon last name, he was startled. Coincidentally, his last name was the same as mine. He was a genealogist, and that brief conversation led to our friendship. He provided me with amazing information about the origin of the family name. I often think about the convenience of ordering groceries online but doing so this time would have resulted in a missed opportunity for that interpersonal exchange with a stranger.

The value of technology to communication is, in some regards, indisputable. Nevertheless,

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COMMUNICATION



SPEAKING AND LISTENING TO OTHERS FACE-TO-FACE CAN REDUCE ANXIETY OR CONFLICT AND OFTENTIMES INDUCE CONFIDENCE OR CONGRUENCE. IN THE ABSENCE OF WORDS, IT CAN SOMETIMES BE A HUG, A HANDSHAKE, A NOD OR A SMILE.

being a "screen dominant" society comes with its pros and cons, and perhaps one of the most significant casualties is the undervaluing of face-toface *interpersonal communication*. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed both strengths and weaknesses in a number of social systems. It heightened the demanding presence of media technology while also highlighting the damaging absence of face-to-face dialogue.

Finally, of most importance is the therapeutic value of interpersonal communication. Speaking and listening to others face-to-face can reduce anxiety or conflict and oftentimes induce confidence or congruence. In the absence of words, it can sometimes be a hug, a handshake, a nod or a smile. Poet John Donne said, "No man is an island...." in his writings; psychologist Abraham Maslow wrote about "belongingness" in his hierarchy of needs. The ubiquity of technology is apparent, but when it comes to communication, like Thanksgiving dinner, some things are better done the old-fashioned way.

Murray Fortner, Ph.D. is Department Chair of Psychology and Sociology at TCC Northeast.

Meet the New TCC Board Members



By Gloria Fisher

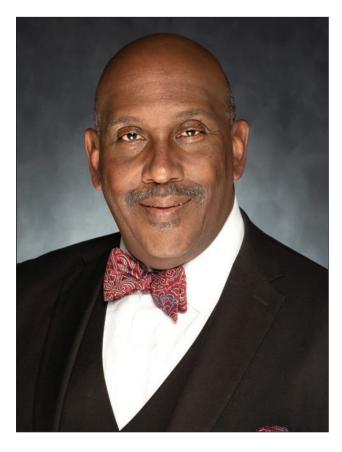
even elected officials comprise the Tarrant County College Board of Trustees, each representing their residential districts. Board members volunteer their time and attend numerous events including monthly work sessions and board meetings, as well as campusbased events that engage the community.

Newly elected Board President Teresa Avala represents District 1; her term ends in May 2027. Ayala first was elected in 2015 and recently re-elected to serve another term. She also serves on the TCC Foundation Board of Directors and is a proud TCC alumna. Former Fort Worth Mayor Kenneth Barr serves as vice president on the Board of Trustees representing District 7; his term ends in May 2025. Barr also serves on the TCC Foundation Board of Directors and has been on the TCC Board of Trustees since 2019. Gwendolyn Morrison represents District 6 and has been a member of the TCC Board of Trustees since 1976, celebrating 45 years of service on the board; her term ends in May 2025. Morrison is a community advocate and educator. William Greenhill represents District 4: he has served on the Board since 2010. Greenhill is an attorney in Fort Worth.

Three new Board of Trustees members were elected last May to represent Districts 2, 3 and 5, respectively. Meet the newly elected trustees:

Jeannie Deakyne's dedication to serving TCC and the citizens of Tarrant County led her to run for the District 3 seat on the Board, formerly held by Diane Patrick; her term ends in May 2027. Deakyne's immediate goal on the Board of Trustees is to collaborate with members of the Board and TCC staff to effectively manage the \$825 million bond passed by Tarrant County voters in 2019. Her other goals include improving the economy in the shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic to "put Texans back to work through TCC's ability to provide training and certifications for skilled trades," she says. As a board member, she also looks forward to growing partnerships between TCC and North Texas public schools by easing the admissions process.

She serves as vice president of operations for the National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, where she was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the construction of the museum. On July 4, Deakyne celebrated her 20th wedding anniversary to Will Deakyne, whom she met while both were serving as army officers. Together, they have three daughters and spend most of their free time supporting youth sports. When time permits, her family is on a mission to visit all 254 county courthouses in Texas; to date, they have visited 130 of them. Her family — including two golden retrievers — also enjoys spending time at Lake Tawakoni.



Leonard Hornsby was nominated by Michael Evans to take his place on the TCC Board of Trustees for District 5 after Evans won the mayoral election for the City of Mansfield and resigned from the board. Hornsby is an alumnus of TCC and later returned to serve as a counselor. He realized his affinity for TCC was strong and decided to run for the District 5 seat on the Board of Trustees; his term ends in May 2023. His goal as a member of the Board of Trustees is to provide governance and oversight that leads to success for TCC students. "Trustees ensure that the policies are in place to support the goals of being One College, being Student Ready and Serving the Community," he said.

Hornsby served in the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Air Force Reserves for 23 years and retired as a master sergeant. He is currently the executive pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield, Texas, where he has served for the past 23 years. After earning an Associate of Arts degree from TCJC, he went on to The University of Arlington, earning a Bachelor of Business in Management, then a Master of Arts in Marriage/ Family Counseling and a Master of Arts in Religious Education. Currently, he is a Ph.D. candidate at Dallas Baptist University. In his spare time, he enjoys golf and traveling to foreign countries.



Shannon Wood represents District 2, formerly held by Conrad Heede; her term ends in May 2027. As a member of the TCC Board of Trustees, Wood's goals are to represent the students of TCC and community taxpayers. She is a former educator who worked for the Fort Worth ISD and the Juvenile Detention Center of Dallas. A graduate of the University of North Texas, Wood currently tutors students in her home along with holding a full-time job as an executive sales representative for a Fortune 500 company.

Wood enjoys spending time with her daughter, traveling and working on home improvement projects. "I also spend much of my time outside of work with my faithful dog companion, Milo," she said.

BOARD MEMBERS VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME AND ATTEND NUMEROUS EVENTS INCLUDING MONTHLY WORK SESSIONS AND BOARD MEETINGS, AS WELL AS CAMPUS-BASED EVENTS THAT ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY.

DEDICATED TO SERVICE

It isn't about me. It's about all of us doing something that helps. The opportunity to give is just an opportunity to serve. I feel lucky that we have these wonderful ways to do that and these wonderful people who are there to make sure that our students' needs are met.

Judith Carrier, Founding President TCC Southeast

AFTER A 40-YEAR CAREER WITH TCC, JUDITH CARRIER CONTINUES TO SERVE STUDENTS THROUGH THE SCHOLARSHIP SHE CREATED

By Paul Sturiale

ost educators would feel that 40 years of service and leadership to Tarrant County College and its students would be more than enough to create an enduring legacy. But then, Judith Carrier isn't most people.

That's why, upon her retirement in 2011 as founding president of Tarrant County Junior College's (TCC's original name) Southeast Campus, she personified her dedication to TCC by creating an endowed scholarship, the Dr. Judith J. Carrier Scholarship, through the Tarrant County College Foundation. The Fall 2021 semester marks the 10th anniversary of that scholarship.

True to form, she downplays her achievements and scholarship as being anything more than a natural outgrowth of her belief in service and responsibility. "It's important to provide help to deserving students," she said. "I hear about what they're going through, especially now in this pandemic, and it's heartbreaking. They are proud students who want to help themselves and their families. So those of us who can help have a responsibility to do what we can to help the students and help the school fulfill its service mission."

Her scholarship includes a condition that is dear to Carrier's heart — service — by requiring that the recipient volunteer a minimum of eight hours with a nonprofit group during each semester. She also asked that preference be given to students who have fulfilled a leadership role in their community, school or place of work.

Carrier's TCC career included service as an administrator, counselor and educator. Ultimately in 1995, she became TCC's first female campus president.

"We always had intelligent, capable women on faculty and staff. But it just never seemed to occur to some that we may have had more to offer," Carrier said. "But by then, times were changing. And I felt a special responsibility to make the campus successful. It was a wonderful journey, and a lot of work and very intense because everything was so new. But it was wonderful."

The campus opened in 1996 with 3,993 students and 44 full-time faculty. Despite being designed to serve up to 5,000 students, the campus maxed out within four years and its student body ranked as the second largest in TCC.

Carrier's presidency was the logical step along her TCC career, which began in 1971 as a student counselor and associate professor of psychology on the Northeast Campus. When the Northwest Campus opened in 1975, Carrier was appointed dean of student development services, which administered all student services except financial aid.

The move to the Southeast Campus in 1996 allowed Carrier to take her second passion — community service to a new level. During her 16-year tenure, Carrier built the College's presence and impact in South Tarrant County, the City of Arlington and the City of Fort Worth.

"I have always been involved in organizations and business as well as service," she said. "It was a great way to get the College's name out there and let people know we're there serving their students and communities." In addition to serving as the first female president of both the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Fort Worth, she also held leadership positions in a wide variety of social service organizations and special event venues, including being a prominent spokesperson on the North Texas Super Bowl XLV Host Committee.

Despite all her community service, Carrier said, some of her most satisfying moments involved informally interacting with students on campus. "I always thought it was important to be visible on campus, so I specifically made time to walk around and just talk to people. One time, I was picking up some trash and paper on campus and I started talking to a student. She introduced herself and said, 'What do you do?' I said I was the president and she was startled."

Though Carrier retired in 2011, she maintains a lasting presence on the Southeast Campus. She is credited with bringing the \$27 million, 115,000-square-foot Science & Academic Building to campus before retiring. And as a fitting tribute to her life-long service, TCC renamed the campus' library in 2014 as the Judith J. Carrier Library.

"It isn't about me. It's about all of us doing something that helps. The opportunity to give is just an opportunity to serve. I feel lucky that we have these wonderful ways to do that and these wonderful people who are there to make sure that our students' needs are met," Carrier added.

To learn how to support TCC students through a Foundation scholarship, please visit https://foundation.tccd.edu. **CASTING A VISION**

TCC FOUNDATION'S NEW BOARD CHAIR PLANS TO BUILD ON HER PREDECESSOR'S SUCCESS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

By Paul Sturiale

aren Thornton likes the view from the Tarrant County College Foundation's new offices located at TCC Trinity River. But the Foundation's newly appointed board chair's vision extends far beyond the soft bends of the Trinity River.

She clearly sees where the Foundation is and where it can be. She's excited by both.

Driven by a personal passion for education, Thornton sees her tenure as chair as an opportunity to serve TCC's students by leading the Foundation's transformation from a traditional fundraising organization to a dynamic, proactive partner with the school and the community.

"I am continuing the wonderful work that started under the previous chair (Janet Hahn). We are where we are because of her leadership," Thornton said. "Janet formalized the movement to turn the Foundation into an office for proactive advancement and advocacy, to engage and attract people to TCC in ways that go far beyond just giving money. There's always a place for people who just want to give. But whenever possible, we want them to become champions for the school in the community and to become active partners in the students' and school's success."

Working closely with Kristen Bennett, executive vice president of advancement, and TCC Chancellor Eugene Giovannini, Thornton is using her platform to raise the College's and Foundation's visibility and presence in the community.

"We want to tell the College's story. There's a real opportunity to share the value that TCC brings to the community, which is often underappreciated," said Thornton. "TCC is this little — actually gigantic — golden nugget in Tarrant County. There are 100,000+ students and it is one of the premier educational institutions in our area. So, we want others to know the kind of value that it brings and the contribution it makes to the lives of our students and the life of the community."

As the chief administrative officer for FTS International, a leading national energy services company based in Fort Worth, Thornton knows that successful culture change starts from within. She also knows the transition will be a lengthy process that will require redirecting some existing resources and Board activities to set the stage for new initiatives.

"This is a rebuilding year. We'll be resetting our bar," she said. "It doesn't just happen overnight. We will be redirecting the efforts of some of our more tenured Board members and recruiting new members who will undergo a comprehensive orientation. But when we have everything in place, we all will be starting from the same point."

Those initiatives include the recent announcement of four new Board members from the area's business and social service sectors and the change from quarterly to monthly Board meetings. In addition, the meetings will be held on different TCC campuses to familiarize Board members with the diversity and scope of TCC's entire system.

"We are excited by the passion, vision and drive for excellence that Karen will bring to the TCC Foundation," said Bennett. "Karen exudes the type of leadership that's needed to guide us through our next phase in building a Foundation that is sustainable and poised for meaningful impact and success! This is an exciting time for the College and the Foundation because individuals like Karen are willing to selflessly give their time and talents to help the College and its Foundation achieve the critical mission of providing affordable and open access to quality teaching and learning for all."

Through all the changes and activity, Thornton's vision remains focused on the Foundation's primary mission:



My goal is to double the scholarships we have available so that all of our students' needs can be met.

Karen Thornton TCC Foundation Board Chair

serving students. To that end, she said, she will continue to emphasize ongoing community support of the Foundation's scholarships and grants, especially the Eliminating Barriers Student Emergency Assistance Fund. The Fund assists students who may need to leave school because of financial emergencies that stem from lack of income.

"My goal is to double the scholarships we have available so that all of our students' needs can be met," Thornton said. "But my heart lies with the Eliminating Barriers Fund. It's for students who are close to leaving school because an unexpected emergency took their funds. It derails their education and reduces the chance that they will be able to get it back on track.

"If we can eliminate that from happening, we can help our students in ways that will impact them, their families and their communities for their entire lives. If we can accomplish that, we will have fulfilled our goal and the ultimate reason that the College and everything connected to it exists," she said.

"I can see it coming," she added, smiling.

To learn how to support TCC students through a Foundation scholarship, please visit: https://foundation.tccd.edu.

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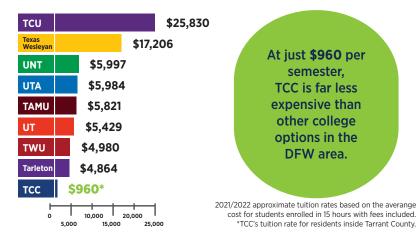
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There was this guy who would bring a keyboard to school every day. A lot of people would just kind of congregate around him, and just, like, have these freestyle jam sessions. All of that prepared me and shaped me for what I'm doing now.

Leon Bridges