



# NURTURING A GREENER FUTURE

# REACH MAGAZINE

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

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## ACTING CHANCELLOR'S CORNER

**I**n March, TCC's Board of Trustees asked me to step into the role of Acting Chancellor. While the corresponding circumstances have been both challenging and unsettling for our community—within and beyond TCC's campuses—I am honored to help lead an institution that has meant so much to me personally as a student, a professor, a campus President, an Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost, and now, Acting Chancellor. Over my lifetime I have seen, firsthand, how Tarrant County College changes personal lives, families and communities for the better. I join our Trustees and the rest of the Cabinet in saying that our commitment to our students and our community will never change, nor will it be compromised.

As a result of our focus on students, we have been able to pivot and enhance our strategies to ensure we give them quality learning experiences and meaningful paths to follow. Ultimately, we want to provide a student-centered environment by supporting culturally appropriate pedagogy and student success initiatives that promote perseverance and increase transfers and degree completion. The adjustments to our programming are to help all students feel a sense of welcome and belonging.

As one of the nation's largest institutions of higher education, TCC serves thousands of students each year, helping them to achieve their goals. Of our more than 46,500 Fall 2020 TCC students, we saw more than 30,500 progress in college to either return to college or graduate from TCC or a transfer institution the following year.

On Saturday, May 14, we celebrated our graduates and their families at our 53rd Annual Commencement Ceremony. This is our favorite day of the year! Our ceremony recognized the accomplishments of those who graduated in the Summer and Fall of 2021 as well as those who graduated this spring. We awarded more than 4,000 degrees and certificates last summer and fall. This spring, we had a large graduating class: there were more than 3,000 spring candidates—some of whom will earn more than one degree and/or certificate of completion.

This year, we had just over 500 graduates of our Early College High School programs. These students undertook the rigors of college courses while still in high school, completing their associate degree program while completing their high school education. We are also proud of our military veterans who chose TCC to help them transition to the next chapter of their lives. Almost 800 veterans and military connected students graduated.

While our students each have their own goals and the types of awards vary, each of the graduates have one thing in common—they've learned that Success is Within Reach through Tarrant County College.

As we look to the future, we know we will have challenges to face—some that may continue and new ones that may arise. Yet, the perseverance and resilience TCC has demonstrated speaks to who we are and who we're helping our students to become. At TCC, we want everyone to feel that they belong and that TCC will help them achieve success.

On behalf of the TCC community, thank you for your continued support and encouragement.



*Elva Concha LeBlanc*

Elva Concha LeBlanc, PhD  
Acting Chancellor



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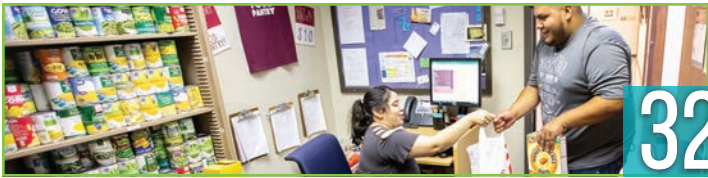
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# COMMON GROUND

GROUNDBREAKING LEARNING COMMONS  
AT THE CENTER OF THE NEW TCC NORTHWEST

By Bill Lace





**S**erafin Garcia, director of campus services at TCC Northwest, wasn't too far off the mark when he said last fall that it sometimes seemed as if everyone at TCC was helping to design "his" campus.

Indeed, the redevelopment of TCC Northwest has been a team effort, and that team extends beyond the campus faculty and staff to include almost 500 of their colleagues across the College, all members of the Three Goals and Eight Principles (3G8P) work teams and advisory committees.

The eight principles—Learning Commons, Integrated Instructional Learning Environments, Integrated Student Success

Model, Student Experience, High Schools, Scheduling and Faculty Utilization, Campus Character and Quality, and Workspace Environments—undergird everything the College does and provides the blueprint for everything it will do—not just at TCC Northwest, but on every campus.

Stephanie Hill, who helps coordinate the 3G8P from the District offices, can't get over the scope of the plan. "TCC is challenging the system of things," she said. "We're out to improve everything—the whole system. We are building—I don't want to say a new institution—but a better version of ourselves within our current self."



The TCC Northwest redevelopment is not 3G8P's first project, but it is far and away the largest and most complex. It's akin to completely rebuilding one's house while still living in it.

Core elements of the campus, built in the 1970s, are being demolished in preparation for new buildings. As the new structures are completed, activities will move into them to free more older spaces for demolition.

TCC Northwest President Zarina Blankenbaker says her crew is ready. "The 3G8P implementation couldn't have

what, for TCC's purposes, a Learning Commons is. The Principle statement refers fundamentally to libraries but was expanded to take in virtually all teaching and learning occurring outside the classroom—math labs, writing centers, reading labs and peer tutoring.

There were turf issues to be resolved. "On the tutoring side, there was a fear of being absorbed by the libraries," said Alex Potemkin, library director at TCC Northwest. "Some people on the library side thought they were going to be absorbed by the other support systems."

and Responsive.

That was the "what." Next came the "how." April Trafton, a TCC Northwest learning lab manager, led the team crafting a service model mapping out specifics. "We worked on what we called a toolkit and created a list of questions to work through and come to consensus on," she said. "Things like what services will be offered, what personnel are required, what resources are required, what's the benefit to the student." Other questions were even more granular, dealing with what functions should be

**Great things are coming. It's going to be exciting having new spaces, all the spaces we wanted to be visible and acceptable to students. And I think it's something to look forward to for other campuses, too, as a prototype. I can't wait. When people walk in (the Learning Commons) they're going to be stunned. We'll be the talk of the country, I'll bet.**

April Trafton,  
Learning Lab Manager, TCC Northwest



started at a better campus," she said. "I don't mean we're better than the others, but if there was a group of people who could go with the flow, it's Northwest. This campus is ready, was ready, was willing and was able to take on the magnitude of what is happening."

But, if TCC Northwest was ready, so were the eight Principle teams. They had been working since 2017, maintaining momentum even through the COVID shutdown. Through seemingly endless discussions, reams of research and occasional resets, they fleshed out the Principle statements and grew them into specific recommendations. Each Principle team has a story to tell of how their recommendations were hammered out and put into practice, but this article will deal with only one—Learning Commons.

The first step was to define just

Sean Madison, president of TCC Trinity River and the Principle's "champion"—a combination cheerleader, arbiter, ringmaster and mother hen—led the way. "It wasn't an easy sell, but I think we were eager," he said. "We knew we had to manage change, but I think we did it in a very creative way, a re-engineering approach."

That meant not trying to fuse the two entities, which Madison said would be like "putting new wine in old wineskins," but by putting students' needs first. The objective then became how to create an environment in which students could best achieve success.

A two-step process emerged. First came CLEVER, a statement as to what the Learning Commons would be—Collaborative, Learning-centered, Engaging, Virtual (technological) and flexible, Encouraging and inspiring,

contiguous, what the hours of operation would be, and how many and what kind of student spaces there should be.

Trafton sent the questions out to the team and promptly left for maternity leave. "When I got back, we were in the depths of it, just going through all the different questions and having all the heated discussions and whatnot," she said.

Out of the heated discussions emerged the Service Model, the companion piece to CLEVER. The Learning Commons Principle team's job wasn't finished. The 3G8P teams are not designed to be finished, but to stay active in fine tuning their recommendations and adapting them to changing circumstances. Madison's team now was ready to take on the job of translating their work to the various architects selected to design new facilities, including those at TCC Northwest.



Some architectural firms might have quailed at the prospect of dealing not just the population of one campus, but also eight other entities from throughout the College who would be sticking in their respective oars. But to the Huckabee + Gensler joint venture it was, as Gensler Principal Architect Barry Hand put it, “a great opportunity. We were pretty resolved about approaching this from a lifestyle perspective and, frankly, kind of staked our pursuit (of the design contract) on it.”

To Michael Ufer, a Gensler senior

forth,” Madison said. “The architects would say, ‘Is this what you meant? Is this it?’ and I was so proud of the team because they were saying, ‘No, that won’t work. Have you considered this?’”

The architects listened and, over much time and many meetings, were able to put together a plan that reflected the Principle’s vision. “I feel like every time we talk with the architects, they’re all super excited about what we’re doing, said Susan Smith, library director at TCC Trinity River. “They know and understand what 3G8P is about.”

this. Different doesn’t mean it’s bad.”

The dreams of the TCC Northwest faculty and staff and the Principle advisory groups are fast becoming reality. Buildings No. 1 and 2 were “topped out,” or roofed, on January 17 and will be completed by February and June of 2023 respectively. The other two new buildings will come online in March 2025.

The people who will eventually take up quarters in the new buildings are like youngsters awaiting Santa Claus. “I’ve always liked the floor plans,” said



associate, the project was not just designing buildings, but rebranding Tarrant County College, knowing that their work at TCC Northwest would be echoed throughout the College. “In the architect’s verbiage, that’s a dream world,” he said. “For us to be able to set the platform, using TCC Northwest as that trajectory point, was wonderful.”

“The architects understood the process up front,” Blankenbaker said. “They met with the advisory panels to try to understand the Principles’ basic missions. They then synthesized that information and came up with key concepts that would permeate each building—clarity, connectivity, community, identity, efficiency and stewardship.”

Interactions between the architects and the Principle team were not always kumbaya. “We were going back and

But it wasn’t just the team members’ expertise and persistence that impressed the architects. “The groups that we met with were very passionate,” Ufer said, “and when somebody matches our passion, we learn more. It makes good processes stronger, and the vision is more resolute. And, we want that from all our clients because it enables us to be better designers.”

At length, the floor plans went to TCC Northwest and another phase began. There was more give and take, more “Could we have this?” and “Have you thought about that?” The same Learning Commons turf issues popped up, and Blankenbaker had to pour a bit of oil on the troubled waters, telling people their work was important and would continue, but in a different setting. “I’m saying to my campus, ‘We can do this,’” she said. “It’s different, but we can do

Potemkin. “It just gets more exciting because the architects are really incorporate those real big function pieces we talked about. It will be very cool.”

“Great things are coming,” Trafton said. “It’s going to be exciting having new spaces, all the spaces we wanted to be visible and acceptable to students. And I think it’s something to look forward to for other campuses, too, as a prototype. I can’t wait. When people walk in (the Learning Commons) they’re going to be stunned. We’ll be the talk of the country, I’ll bet.”

<https://www.tccd.edu/goals1>

**To learn more about campus upgrades:**

<https://tccd.edu/bondupdates1>



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## THE EXCITING NEW WAYFINDING PLANS FOR ALL TCC FACILITIES

By Hillary Green

**WELCOME TO  
YOUR NEW JOURNEY**

Imagine walking onto a college campus for the very first time. You're greeted with bold signs that let you know exactly where you are and how to find where you need to go. As you continue your journey, striking displays guide you to your final destination. Upon arrival, clear signage lets you know you're in the right place.

This is the experience that TCC's Campus Character and Quality (CCQ) team hopes visitors will soon have on its campuses.

The CCQ team, consisting of TCC staff and faculty, was created as part of the College's Three Goals and Eight Principles (3G8P)—the strategic roadmap TCC uses to guide decision-making that supports the student experience. CCQ is focused on creating a welcoming and easily navigable experience while using space effectively to maximize the student experience.

The CCQ team initially looked only at the brick-and-mortar buildings on TCC's six campuses, but after listening to the broader community, they reimagined their charge as making TCC a destination experience—a place where students and community want to come and learn.

"Every student, employee or visitor should feel welcome and at home when they step on a TCC campus," said Reginald Gates, vice chancellor for communications and external affairs and CCQ champion. "Part of achieving that feeling is making sure our campuses are easy to navigate."

In Fall 2019, the CCQ team conducted campus surveys and interviews with both students and employees to understand areas of opportunity that can enhance the experience as people navigate TCC's six campuses. Based on the feedback, increased signage, digital maps and enhanced wayfinding tools topped the priority list.

A common theme from student feedback was getting around campus at the start of term. "In my initial weeks of navigating campus, it was difficult for me to get my bearings due to the labeling of buildings," said first-year engineering student Dean Jackson.

While the CCQ team was working on their findings, TCC's Real Estate and Facilities department was leading the ongoing maintenance and assessment of campus facilities. This work identified the aging infrastructure of several campuses—some of which are more than



50 years old. This work to modernize existing buildings nested perfectly within the focus of the CCQ team.

Through a series of workshops with students and employees, the CCQ and Real Estate teams identified four key priorities to improve the on-campus experience: increase visibility of the TCC brand, create cohesive orientation and wayfinding, clarify connection points (like parking lots) and develop a consistent naming system, or nomenclature, for buildings and classrooms.

### Navigating a Way Forward

According to Michael Tankersly, director of facilities operations and CCQ committee leader, TCC plans to make the process from “couch to class” as seamless as possible. With help from external collaborators Beck Architecture, Entro and Mapwell Studio, the CCQ team identified a user journey framework to guide the project: plan, approach, navigate, depart.

For example, a prospective student might *plan* their trip to TCC by searching for the address using a map application on their phone. As they *approach* their TCC campus, the student will want to know they are in the right parking area to access the building they need. The student could then *navigate* to meet with the admissions team or tour the campus using physical and digital wayfinding tools. To conclude their visit to TCC, the prospective student easily journeys back to their parking or pickup location and *departs*.

While everyone’s journey to and needs from TCC will be different, this new wayfinding strategy will ensure each visitor can get where they need to go easily.

The new look and feel won’t just make navigating campus easier; the CCQ team hopes it also will help students feel more at home. While each campus across Tarrant County has its own character, students should know they

are part of the TCC family as a whole. As part of the College’s 3G8P, TCC aims to provide a consistent and successful student journey as One College. “No matter the campus you visit, the feeling of welcome and ease of access should be the expectation,” said Gates.

### A Bold New Look

Using exaggerated dimensions, bold colors and modern typography, visitors should not be able to miss the campus signage. The new design elements aim to be clear and consistent across all campuses, while still leaving room for each campus to express their unique identity.

From the moment visitors arrive, orientation beacons and directional markers will greet them and, quite literally, point them in the right direction.

Instead of using acronyms for building names, such as NHPE for Northeast Health and Physical Education, building names will focus on simplicity with the campus identifier and building number only. This change makes it easier for visitors to understand exactly which building they are looking for, as well as increases facility flexibility as some buildings no longer house the courses for which they were originally named.

Karylliam Quintana Rodriguez, a third-year education student, thinks the new look will match TCC’s characteristics; in her words, “modern, clean, fresh.”

Beyond the directional and wayfinding signage, large monument letters will greet students on each campus. Lisa Benedetti, dean of humanities at TCC Northwest and CCQ committee leader, anticipates students being able to interact with the letters during their time at TCC.

Benedetti, along with TCC Northwest Life Sciences Chair Greta Bowling and TCC Northwest Student Activities coordinator Rachael McCloskey, was on a CCQ fact-finding trip in Utah and decided to take an unplanned excursion

to Salt Lake Community College. Upon arriving, they immediately knew they were in the right place when they saw large letters proclaiming “SLCC”. The trio jumped out and started taking pictures and interacting with the letters. Soon they were thinking of how to bring that same feeling to TCC.

“In the age of Instagram, we hope these monument letters encourage our students to engage with the College,” said Bowling.

McCloskey envisions students taking pictures there while at New Student Orientation, on their first day of school or at graduation time.

Second-year criminology student Shanique Smith thinks the monument letters will drive people to take pictures and interact. “Even potential students, when they come for a tour, I think they will want to take pictures there,” said Smith.

Furthering the One College goal, the monument letters will be a common thread and act as the front door to each campus. No matter which campus a student attends, they will all get to experience walking by the letters as they begin their day at TCC.

The Real Estate team expects signage and wayfinding tools to debut on the Northwest and Southeast campuses, as part of their redevelopment through the 2019 Bond Program.

“We wanted to ensure that no matter where students or the community came to us, they would be able to find their way and be comfortable,” said Benedetti.

**Learn more about TCC’s Three Goals and Eight Principles:**  
<https://www.tccd.edu/goals2>

**For more information about the 2019 Bond Program:**  
<https://tccd.edu/bondupdates2>

**Experience digital maps:**  
<https://www.tccd.edu/locations/>





# PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

## INTRODUCING A NEW, STREAMLINED WAY TO DISCOVER AND NAVIGATE ALL TCC PROGRAMS

By Melissa Bowden

**W**hat do you want to study at college? When the answer to this question does not come easily, a student may lose time and money taking unnecessary courses, get frustrated trying to find a direction and eventually drop out of school.

### **TCC Can Help with That**

Because of their commitment to supporting student success, TCC College faculty introduced the Guided Pathways concept to TCC. Guided Pathways is an integrated, Collegewide redesign of the student experience, from enrollment to graduation. The innovative approach is designed to connect students with programs that are aligned with topics and activities they enjoy, which helps them identify their goals earlier and succeed in school and at work. Guided Pathways also facilitates closer collaboration across programs, departments, services and campuses to support students' success.

### **Start with the End in Mind**

Degree and certificate programs that share similar interests and skills are grouped in career areas called Pathways. TCC identified five Pathways that are aligned to the Texas high school endorsements: Arts & Humanities, Business & Industry, Health Science, Human & Public Services, and Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM). Instead of browsing the entire College Catalog and then trying this course or that program, students have a plan and support. Advisors help students choose a Pathway that fits their interests and help them stay on that Pathway. Meanwhile, faculty make sure TCC's programs support high-demand, high-wage jobs and those students learn the skills they need to succeed in those jobs.

"A benefit of Guided Pathways is that we begin with the end in mind—what career/



transfer opportunities exist for students—and work from there to ensure students are achieving their goals,” said Candy M. Center, district director of curriculum and educational planning.

### **Navigating a Pathway? You’ll Need a Map**

Key to the Guided Pathways approach are program maps that simplify student choices and lift barriers. Each map charts a clear, structured path to finishing a program. Students can see exactly what’s ahead and stay on track.

The program maps are the result of Districtwide collaboration. Faculty, deans, advisors, career advisors, transfer counselors, Academic Affairs teams, District staff and the Web Communications team came together in program mapping sessions to design degree and certificate maps with pathway courses and core courses placed in intentional, balanced sequences.

“When students identify their pathway early, they are more likely to take the ‘right’ courses for the pathway, in the right order, and stay on their path to success,” according to Christina Ross, Guided Pathways faculty lead and associate professor of speech.

### **New Approach, New Webpages**

To introduce Guided Pathways to TCC website visitors, the Web Communications team redesigned the program webpages, which now are organized by Pathway. Updated content answers the questions, “What kind of job can I get?” and “Is this program right for me?”

The highlight on each program webpage is the new “Job Titles & Career Info” section that features a feed from Burning Glass: Career Insight, an analytics software that delivers current job market data. Because the feeds are tailored to each program and career field, visitors enjoy the convenience of curated research. They can explore a wealth of real-time job information through a user-friendly interface: salary ranges, career demand, skills sought, job titles and more. Not limited to the DFW Metroplex, visitors also can broaden the scope to county, state or national levels to see or compare job information.

To complement the Career Insight data, faculty teams added program-related career information, including extra details like personality traits, aspects of daily work life and job activities that help students identify with each career field.

### **The Journey Continues**

Planning for and launching Guided Pathways has been a Districtwide journey. But its journey does not end here. With the future in mind, the College built sustainability into its Guided Pathways framework. Faculty, Academic Advising, Career Services and Transfer Resources will continue to work together toward the ongoing goal of supporting student success.

***Which Pathway would you choose? Explore the options:***  
***[www.tccd.edu/pathways](http://www.tccd.edu/pathways)***

### **Pathways by the Numbers**

- 4 Years
- 5 TCC pathways aligned with high school endorsements
- 29 Program Mapping Sessions
- 751 Program Mapping Session Participants
- 95 Redesigned webpages
- 9 Texas Success Center Pathways Institutes
- 102 Texas Success Center Pathways Institutes Participants
- 214 Advisors certified as National Career Development Association (NCDA) Career Advisors
- 11 Staff members certified to provide NCDA training

### **Pathways Milestones**

**2016**—TCC faculty invited Rob Johnstone, Ph.D., founder and president of the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, to the College to give an overview of the Guided Pathways approach and to facilitate sessions on how to build a Guided Pathways Program.

**2017**—TCC connected its work with:

- National Pathways Work: American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Pathways 2.0 Institutes
- Regional Pathways Work: Texas Success Center Texas Pathways Institutes

**2018**—TCC began the program mapping process with four teams:

- Business
- Education
- Information Technology
- Allied Health & Nursing

**2019-2020**—TCC completed program mapping sessions for all career and technical programs as well as Associate of Arts programs.

**2021**

- Advisors and staff certified by National Career Development Association (NCDA)
- Web Communications published redesigned program webpages: Find Your Pathway ([www.tccd.edu/pathways](http://www.tccd.edu/pathways))



# TACKLING THE TOUGH ISSUES

PIONEERING LOCAL PODCAST ENCOURAGES CRITICAL THINKING

By Reginald Lewis



With most of the show's listeners coming from higher education or those doing Diversity & Inclusion work, there is an opportunity to advance social justice in our communities.

Larry Jefferson,  
coordinator for Tarrant County College's Intercultural Network



**T**he podcasting industry is on a roll. Once a technological curiosity known only to a select few, podcasts are becoming increasingly popular. In 2020, an estimated 100 million people listened to a podcast each month and it's expected to eclipse 125 million in 2022, according to *Forbes*.

Podcasts are becoming a prevalent tool in higher education, with several schools and universities launching them to target various audiences. Podcasts can be used to showcase expertise and share knowledge. They also offer schools an opportunity to engage with current and prospective students alike.

Just over two years ago, Larry Jefferson and Dantrayl Smith—both coordinators for Tarrant County College's Intercultural Network—decided it was time to launch a podcast to encourage students to think critically about race and culture. The educators got the idea to start "Making Sense of Diversity" back in 2019 when the duo attended a conference at Baylor University.

"As we're sitting in this workshop, Baylor representatives were having a conversation with us, explaining how they used podcasts to engage students and staff," said Jefferson, who works closely with students at TCC Southeast. "The Baylor reps talked about podcasting and how big of a hit it had become." A few weeks after the conference, Jefferson and Smith started "Making Sense of Diversity" through TCC Connect, the College's virtual campus.

"We did a couple of episodes there," added Jefferson. "We discussed what is culture and during that time we interviewed staff members to let them explain to our listening audience about some of the stereotypes and traditions that they believed in."

Within months, the weekly podcast had a loyal following that included members of the TCC community and people from the community at-large. Things seemed to be trending upward until COVID-19 shut down the College.

"When Larry and I started working remotely, we had a meeting to figure

out exactly how we really could capture what it is we wanted to capture with the students," said Smith, who runs the Intercultural Network at TCC Trinity River. "We played around a little bit longer, but then you know, George Floyd happened. We then had a real serious deep conversation and came up with the idea of doing a podcast on the misperceptions of Black men."

According to Smith, the show "blew up" that season and the duo decided to expound upon that in the spring semester (2021) by focusing on female identity. That particular move took the show to the next level, providing an unexpected opportunity to the two educators.

Jefferson and Smith were approached by some individuals who encouraged them to produce a podcast that was independent of TCC. Soon thereafter, they met with TCC's legal team to ensure a move would be in the best interest of all parties.

"We decided to jump out there and do our own thing, which led to the time change." The podcast moved from Mondays at 12:30 p.m. (CT) to a 5 p.m. time slot, which opened things up to a wider audience.

Now armed with the freedom to tackle more controversial issues on their show, Jefferson and Smith changed the show's name to the "RAD (Racism: Access Denied) Podcast." Since the rebrand, the podcasters have covered a variety of topics: police brutality, community relations building, education reform and red lining in Tarrant County, just to name a few.

"RAD is kind of radical," said Smith. "We want to implement change and enhance the mindsets of our listeners." Jefferson, who has been friends with Smith for five years, agreed that podcasting has been transformative work.

According to the RAD Podcast YouTube page, the podcast is unlike anything on the higher education airwaves: honest, raw, funny and refreshingly real, just the way Jefferson and Smith envisioned it.

"We want to send a clear message

that racism is not accepted and if you are racist, maybe it's time for you to have a conversation with somebody as to understanding that culture a little bit better," Jefferson explained. "With most of the show's listeners coming from higher education or those doing Diversity & Inclusion work, there is an opportunity to advance social justice in our communities."

Even though these two men are extremely busy engaging TCC students, they're still able to carve out some time to discuss and finalize show topics. In addition to their own ideas, they seriously consider listener feedback and suggestions from past guests for possible show topics. When it comes to booking show guests, they don't hesitate to tap into their extensive network.

Earlier this spring, two political candidates running for Tarrant County judge seats joined the RAD Podcast to discuss why exercising the right vote is essential to being a good citizen and voter suppression's impact in minority communities.

"Yeah, we're gonna face long lines," Jefferson explained. "You're gonna face people saying that you can't vote here. You can't vote there. We wanted people to take that initiative and not give up their voting rights just because they faced some adversity."

Ultimately, Jefferson and Smith want their show to be found on iTunes, Spotify and other popular platforms to help share their energy with the mainstream.

Three years into podcasting, Jefferson says there's still untapped opportunity to inspire positive change. "Just continuing to educate the masses and continuing to grow, look at ways that that we may not be covering certain things and bring those topics to life."

**Check out the RAD Podcast:**

**Facebook:** [RAD Podcast](#)

**Instagram:** [RadPodcast1](#)

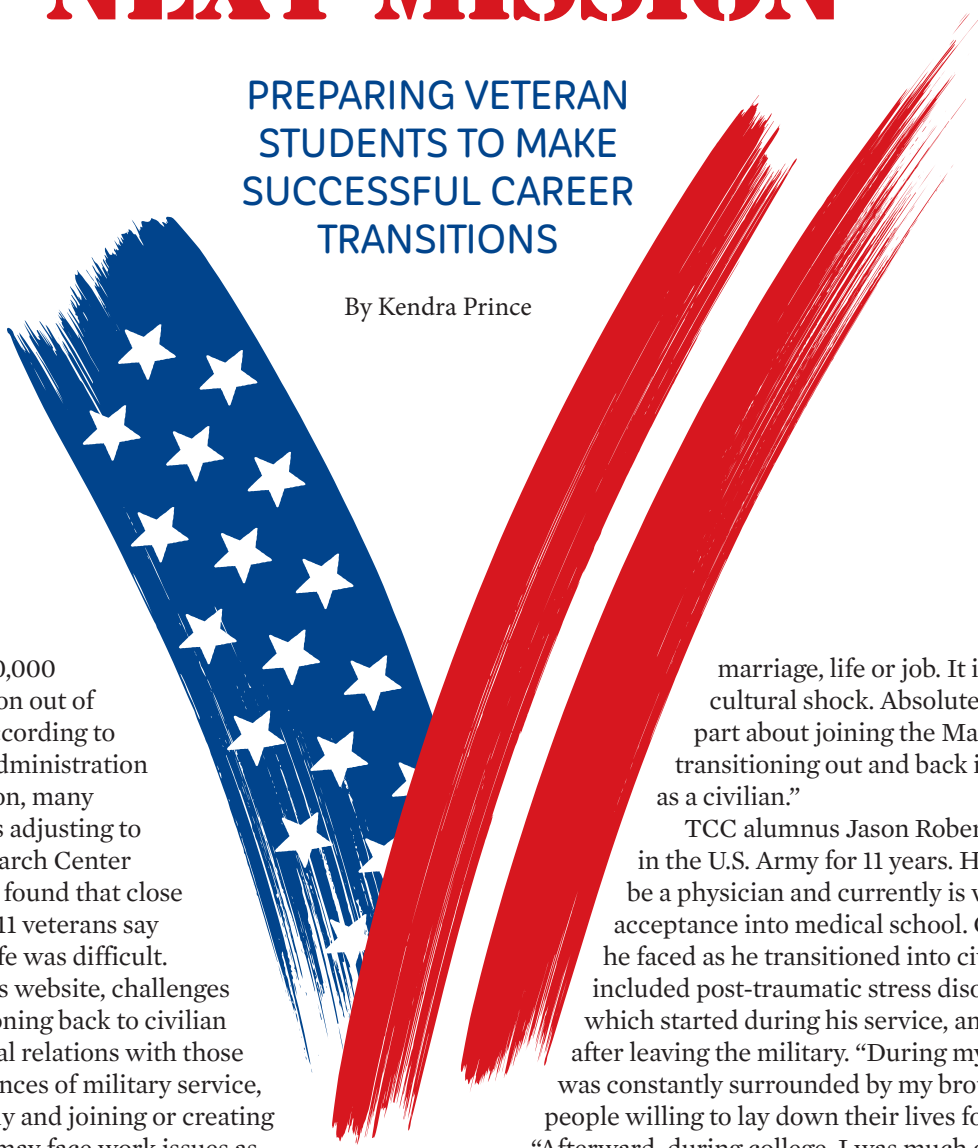
**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP9JuZp7JkvKONeYemB1B7Q/about>



# READY FOR THE NEXT MISSION

## PREPARING VETERAN STUDENTS TO MAKE SUCCESSFUL CAREER TRANSITIONS

By Kendra Prince



**A**pproximately 250,000 veterans transition out of the military annually, according to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VA). With that transition, many veterans face challenges adjusting to civilian life. A Pew Research Center study published in 2019 found that close to 50 percent of post-9/11 veterans say readjusting to civilian life was difficult.

According to the VA's website, challenges facing veterans transitioning back to civilian life include interpersonal relations with those unfamiliar with the nuances of military service, reconnecting with family and joining or creating a community. Veterans may face work issues as well, including finding a civilian job, returning to a job held before military service or adjustment to a different approach and pace of work. Additionally, veterans may be challenged by lack of daily structure and scarcity of basic necessities such as clothing, food and housing.

TCC student veterans often face similar challenges. "Being a Marine changes who you are and your outlook on life," said Justin Dearick, who is studying to become a paramedic with the ultimate goal of serving as a flight paramedic. He served in the military for five years. At 24 years old, he found himself married with a child and "absolutely no idea of how to run a

marriage, life or job. It is a complete cultural shock. Absolutely the hardest part about joining the Marine Corps was transitioning out and back into the world as a civilian."

TCC alumnus Jason Roberts served in the U.S. Army for 11 years. He plans to be a physician and currently is waiting for acceptance into medical school. Challenges he faced as he transitioned into civilian life included post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which started during his service, and loneliness after leaving the military. "During my service, I was constantly surrounded by my brothers and people willing to lay down their lives for me," he said. "Afterward, during college, I was much older than the average student. I was married and had three children, so fitting in and finding friends was nearly impossible."

After serving in the U.S. Navy for 20 years, Eli Valdivia planned to work a civilian job and attend school. However, he suffered a major accident while still in the military. He was faced with "the uncertainty of not knowing if I was going to be medically and physically fit to accomplish my goal to attend school and obtain a full-time job. At the last minute, I was told that I couldn't perform the only job I knew since joining the military in 2000," he said. His counselors encouraged him to choose a different path. "I was scared to





**Being a Marine changes who you are and your outlook on life. I absolutely had no idea of how to run a marriage, life or job. It is a complete cultural shock. Absolutely the hardest part about joining the Marine Corps was transitioning out and back into the world as a civilian.**

Justin Dearick, Military Veteran

learn something new and having zero experience.” He currently is pursuing an associate degree in Computer Science.

Although exact numbers are hard to determine due to missing data on enrollment applications and changes in reporting, the most recent statistics indicate TCC had 1,373 student veterans enrolled as of Spring 2022. TCC Northwest veterans counselor Bill Alexander believes the number could be higher. Given the number of student veterans attending TCC, how does the College assist them with issues relating to transition to civilian life including enrollment, education benefits, relationships, careers and mental health?

In 2013, TCC sought to meet the needs of veterans leaving the service and using their educational benefits through the establishment of Veterans Resource Centers at each campus. The first center, called VetSuccess, was located at TCC South. This location was chosen, in part, due to the number of student veterans attending there and the proximity to the local Veterans Administration office, the VA Medical and Outpatient clinics and the Texas Veterans Commission.

Eventually, Veterans Resource Centers opened on each campus. Services and resources provided by the centers “create solutions for educational success by eliminating barriers and transforming veteran and military-connected (dependents) students’ lives,” according to Alexander.



“Veteran and military-connected students receive enrollment assistance, counseling and information on educational and healthcare benefits, which help ease the transition and enhance their overall educational experience.”

Veterans counselors understand the stressors veterans face. Several counselors are either veterans themselves or military-connected through a family member. “I struggled with transitioning out of the military culture and into the civilian mindset,” said Angel Ayala, who served for four years in the U.S. Air Force and now is a veterans counselor at TCC Trinity River. Ayala faced PTSD following trauma incurred during his service. He sought both personal and group counseling, which has enabled him to effectively manage his mental health challenges.

Those very challenges led Ayala to pursue his master’s degree in Counseling Psychology. “I chose this career path because I wanted to learn more about my mental health issues and to be able to help people who struggle with issues just as I did.”

Bill Alexander served in the U.S. Navy for nine years, deploying six times during Desert Shield/Desert Storm and the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. Challenges he faced in transitioning from military service to civilian life involved difficulty using his VA Education Benefits. At the time he attended TCC, there were no veteran services on the campuses. Veterans had to complete paperwork at the county Veterans Services office then bring it to the school.





**Research suggests the single greatest factor in post-traumatic growth in veterans is camaraderie. The dynamics in the Veterans Resource Centers serve as an opportunity for veterans to connect with each other and feel a sense of belonging. We are veterans serving veterans, and it makes a difference.**

Bill Alexander, Veterans Counselor, TCC Northwest

What these counselors have experienced personally informs the services they currently provide veteran students. Initially, Alexander thought he would study mechanical engineering, but discovered his strategic and analytical thinking would serve well in psychology and chose to pursue that as his major. He credits his academic advisor with guiding his exploration of career paths.

“Evidence suggests approximately 20 percent of veterans pursue coursework in a field similar to that in which they performed in the military,” he said. “Most will choose a different pathway for a career in civilian life.”

With his military background as a flight engineer, Alexander said he could have transitioned to a career as a professional pilot. “I decided to focus

on the strengths I had in pursuing a career that would keep me home with my family. Viewing veterans from a strengths perspective rather than one of a deficit model will go a long way in both understanding and serving this unique population.”

Alexander says that Veterans Resource Centers staff are skilled in taking a holistic approach to assisting veteran students with educational objectives and vocational goals. Career Counseling and Career Services provide assistance with résumé building, mock interviews and military-friendly career fairs.

LaJeanne Williams, instructional associate in Career Services at TCC Trinity River, says military skills and qualities of veteran students are taken into consideration when assisting them with their résumés or mock interviews. “We help them to see how their skills and qualities are a benefit

for certain jobs and how best to communicate them to their potential employer,” she said.

“Every combat veteran I’ve ever talked to is always searching to ‘matter again’ in some form or fashion,” said Dearick. “When I was a forklift mechanic, I was making GREAT money (with) low hours and benefits. It was the ‘perfect’ job, and I dreaded it every day and felt very

meaningless, which ultimately drove me to pursue a career as a first responder. I chose this field because it is probably the closest I can get to doing what I was doing in the Marine Corps and definitely gives me that feeling of making a difference again.”

Like Dearick, Roberts also wants to make a difference with his career choice. “I would like it best to be a doctor that travels to different countries providing medical treatment to those that do not have access (to care),” he said.

“A lot of veterans (including myself) make the mistake of chasing the dollar and just trying to make the most money possible,” said Dearick. “For

the first time in their life for a lot of them, they have the opportunity to think for themselves and steer their lives in a direction where they want it to go. (They need to be) sure they are in the driver’s seat.”

Dearick’s and Roberts’ desire to make a difference with their careers seems to be a common thread with veterans. In 2021, The Ambitious VET Network published a white paper on why 65 percent of post-9/11 veterans leave their first post-military job within 24 months of starting. One of the reasons why? Work that is not meaningful.

Alexander says veterans can experience a big adjustment in a post-military job. “I like to communicate that in the military, we lived life, whereas in the civilian world, we do life,” he said. “Military personnel eat, sleep, work, deploy and commune with each other both inside and outside of ‘work.’” Families commune together and enjoy the camaraderie.







**It was at TCC that I realized I could succeed. The instructors gave me encouragement and support. I went from doubting myself to feeling confident in what I could achieve. It is a great place to start and get an idea of what college life is like.**

Angel Ayala, Veterans Counselor, TCC Trinity River

“Civilian life is punching the clock until the day is done, then we all go home to our own environments until the next day. Civilian life is routine—military life is purposeful.”

Chris Hoffmann, founder and CEO of The Ambitious VET Network, said their research reflected “education and training gaps in providing ambitious veterans with the meaningful career, emotional intelligence and purpose they are seeking to have.” He also recommends that educational institutions “provide more information and resources for veteran students to help them understand themselves more and create programs that empower them to create the needed support systems and network needed to find the fulfilling career they desire most.”

In addition to assistance with career and education choices and counseling services, the TCC Veterans Resource Centers offer veteran students the ability to connect and create a community that evokes a sense of belonging, according to Alexander. “Research suggests the single greatest factor in post-traumatic growth in veterans is camaraderie,” he said. “The dynamics in the Veterans Resource Centers serve as an opportunity for veterans to connect with each other and feel a sense of belonging. We are veterans serving veterans, and it makes a difference.”

Valdivia agrees. “The Veterans Resource Center is my home away from home. I feel welcomed and that I belong here. This is what I want to experience, and TCC is going beyond my expectations,” he said. “Dr. Alexander is a great mentor and really cares about your future.”

Dearick feels the same. “I would not have made it into class or be able to continue without the Veterans Resource Center. It is the most valuable tool I have. The counselor is irreplaceable.”

For Roberts, his time at TCC was “like a dream come true.” He credits veterans counselor Valerie Groll with leading him in the right direction. Roberts found his place in leadership, serving as vice president for the Student Government Association and president of the Student Veterans of America chapter at his campus. He was awarded the Student Veteran of the Year. He met with TCC South’s president and vice presidents regularly and had the opportunity to meet with a state representative and the mayor of Fort Worth to request future funding for TCC. Additionally, he volunteered at several shelters and food banks and participated in building houses for Habitat for Humanity.

Alexander says his time as a student at TCC was a time of perpetual growth. “TCC faculty/staff contributed greatly to my overall holistic growth and development, providing me opportunities in mentorship, vocational guidance, educational support and cheering me along the way,” he said. “I like to think we continue to do this today.”

Veteran students and counselors have advice for veterans considering furthering their education at TCC. “Embrace your past and figure out how to use it in a positive, productive way,” said Dearick. “Don’t be ashamed to find someone to talk to here at the school if you’re struggling. All it takes is for you to ask for help, and I promise you someone will be there.”

Valdivia encourages veterans to make an appointment with a counselor at TCC. “It is never too late to start school. Come and give yourself a chance.”

Reflecting on his experience as a student at TCC, Ayala said, “It was at TCC that I realized I could succeed. The instructors gave me encouragement and support,” he said. “I went from doubting myself to feeling confident in what I could achieve. It is a great place to start and get an idea of what college life is like.”

Roberts considers TCC “an excellent choice for any veteran deciding to start or return to school.” He suggests going to meet every professor during office hours, before the semester begins. “Most of all, stay proactive in your education, find others and tutor them,” he said. “You will be surprised how much better you understand a subject when you spend time teaching it and trying to understand it from another’s perspective.”

Echoing the advice about meeting with professors, Alexander says, “I tell veterans it is important to connect with faculty/staff and allow us to help you navigate this environment.” He also recommends that veterans become engaged and become leaders just as they were in the military. “We need them, and TCC is better for it.”

Finally, Alexander wants veterans to know this: “You belong here! Education is a worthy pursuit for so many reasons, and veterans bring with them all the ingredients for becoming successful.”

**Contacts for veterans at TCC:**

**<https://www.tccd.edu/veterancontacts>**



# GREEN ZONE TRAINING

By Kendra Prince

In 2017, Tarrant County College began offering Green Zone Training to faculty and staff. The training focuses on military cultural awareness and how best to serve veteran and military-connected (V/MC) students. It has the objective of student academic success and a sense of belonging to a learning community where the perspectives and experiences of those students are valued. It showcases best practices to support V/MC students and how to apply the best practices in courses.

According to Bill Alexander, veterans counselor at TCC Northwest, “The training communicates who veteran and military-connected students are, why they served, their strengths and challenges and resources for assisting V/MC students.”

TCC Southeast veterans counselor Christina McDonald said the training has evolved through the years to ensure content is aligned with relevant and current research.

Green Zone training is offered once per semester and is delivered by TCC veterans counselors. Additionally, the training is offered virtually to reach a greater number of participants across the District. The counselors offer a truncated version for Connections Week to introduce the training.

“We strongly encourage all faculty/staff and administrators to take advantage of this timely and unique professional development in support of diversity, equity and inclusion,” said Alexander.

Alyssa Guglielmi-White, lead academic advisor at TCC Southeast, took the training virtually fall 2020. “It was a great experience and eye-opening to learn about the transition our veteran students have to make when starting college,” she said.

Guglielmi-White gained an appreciation for “the processes and rules our students have to follow to ensure they are compliant with VA benefits,” she said.

“As an advisor, I am sometimes one of the first interactions these students have with TCC. I have applied these skills when meeting these students for the first time and identifying them,” she said. “The connection

## EQUIPPING EMPLOYEES TO SERVE VETERAN AND MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

can be as simple as walking with them to the Veterans Resource Center to make sure they are comfortable. It also is useful in identifying when a military-connected student may need additional resources or counseling and quickly finding a way to meet that need.”

To ease the transition to civilian life for veteran students, Green Zone Training recommends remembering each student is unique in their experiences, communicating effectively and providing information about various services and resources available as seems



appropriate.

Guglielmi-White heartily recommends taking Green Zone Training. “Taking the time to gain additional skills to work with our diverse student body is always time well used,” she said. “This is a valuable training and is impactful for our military-connected students.”



**It was a great experience and eye-opening to [learn about] the transition our veteran students have to make when starting college.**

Alyssa Guglielmi-White,  
lead academic advisor, TCC Southeast

**To learn more about Green Zone Training, see  
<https://www.tccd.edu/services/veterans-services/>**



# MISSION FOCUSED: SUCCESS IN COLLEGE

By Kendra Prince

According to the VA College Toolkit on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website, more than 670,000 veterans have used VA education and vocational rehabilitation benefits to further their education to date. Typically, veteran students do not fit the mold of traditional college students (ages 18-22). In fact, only 15 percent of veteran students fall in that age range. Most are 24 to 40 years of age. Sixty-two percent of veteran students are first-generation college students. Many of them have families. Nearly half are married and/or have children. Twice as many



veteran students have a job off-campus compared to traditional college students.

Thanks to strengths and qualities developed during their military service, veteran students often perform well in college classes. The VA College Toolkit lists a host of strengths veterans bring to their campuses: work ethic, organizational skills, leadership, discipline, capacity for teamwork, problem solving and resiliency.

How do veteran students perform in unexpected, high-stress situations compared to their non-veteran peers? Nicole D'Alesandro, counselor at TCC South, sought to answer that question as she worked on her on doctoral dissertation. For her research, D'Alesandro focused on the academic outcomes of 559 FTIC (first time in college) veteran and non-veteran students across the TCC District during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Spring 2020).

Dictionary.com readers voted the word “unprecedented” as “Word of the Year” in 2020. And, why not? It was an apt description of all the firsts the world experienced with the pandemic.

In March 2020, TCC extended spring break for students by a week. When classes resumed on March 23, 2020, in-person classes

## HOW A MILITARY BACKGROUND PREPARES STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE

became virtual. Not only did faculty and staff suddenly have to adapt to new methods of work and instruction—so did TCC students. Unprecedented, indeed.

D'Alesandro's research showed that regardless of the hurdles—campus closures, virtual classes, social distancing—veteran students had significantly higher end-of-semester GPAs and were almost three times as likely to persist in their courses than the non-veteran students during the Spring 2020 semester. Her recommendation? Highlight the strengths of veteran students because they make a difference in academic performance.

Christina McDonald, veterans counselor at TCC Southeast, agrees, noting that the veteran staff and students appreciate the focus on skills rather than possible challenges they may face in their transition to college. “In fact, with proper guidance, more veteran students come to college equipped for academic success than not,” she said. “However, when deficits do exist, the veteran counselors determine the tools and services needed to encourage academic and personal success.” McDonald says other strengths embedded in veterans' personalities—such as exceptional communication and ability to follow detailed directions—allow them to truly make the most of campus resources designed to assist them.

D'Alesandro identifies one other strength she sees in veteran students: exceptional humility. Rather than boasting in their performance, she said, they will simply say, “This is what I do.”

**Research showed that with proper guidance, more veteran students come to college equipped for academic success than not.**

Christina McDonald,  
Veterans Counselor, TCC Southeast

**VA College Toolkit:**  
<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/student-veteran>

# PART OF THE PROCESS

THE TCC COMMUNITY BECOMES AGENTS OF CHANGE  
THROUGH “BOOTS ON THE GROUND”  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

By Bill Lace

The TCC Trinity River audience cheered as the candidates took the stage on an October afternoon in 2019—Biden, Harris, Buttigieg, Warren, Sanders. For more than an hour they defended their own views while attacking those of their opponents.

It was great political theater. Actually, it was genuine theater since the “candidates” were played by faculty and staff in just one of the College’s many efforts to promote student civic engagement. Others, while perhaps not as flamboyant, have included “I’m a voter” masks, a voting information hotline, a how-to-vote video and presentations on everything from “fake news” to the Electoral College.

The role of civic engagement in Texas colleges and universities was formalized in 2012 when the Higher Education Coordinating Board formulated its statement of core objectives, among which was “social responsibility,” which has since been defined to include civic engagement.

Yet, TCC had its champions years earlier, particularly Joan Johnson, whose contributions draw praise bordering on awe from her colleagues. Murray Fortner, who picked up the mantle when Johnson moved from TCC Northeast to TCC Connect, said, “Her energy and commitment to this cause were invaluable.

The output for our campus is

TCC







directly the result of her input.”

Johnson preached student engagement to her Government classes “from day one,” which was in the mid ’90s when she was an adjunct at TCC Northwest. Later, as a department chair at Northeast, she had a lot of opportunities to create different programs, leading the drive for designation as a “Voter Friendly Campus” and connecting the College to national organizations such as “All-In” and “Ask Every Student.” Each year she arranged a forum for mayors of municipalities in northeast Tarrant County. Her students drafted the questions and acted as moderators.

One of Johnson’s favorite assignments is to have every student research an issue of importance to them, whether local, state or federal, and write and mail a letter stating their views to whomever oversees that issue, be it a U.S. senator or a local city council member. “One of my outcomes for every government class I teach is not just that students learn about government, but that they take their opinions and do something with them,” she said.

Johnson wasn’t the only one to use her position to promote student civic engagement. Bill Coppola had been huge proponent during his tenure as a vice president in the Lone Star College system and brought his ardor for civic engagement to TCC Southeast as president in 2012. He also brought membership in Campus Compact, a national organization of colleges and universities promoting civil and social responsibility.

“I was on the executive board,” he said. “So, I brought it here and got the faculty involved. We didn’t push it, but we wanted to make sure that understanding our responsibility of producing civically engaged students is everybody’s job, not just the political science and history faculty.”

Kristan Foust, associate professor of History, was one of Coppola’s faculty members who answered the call, even though she’s always tried to stay away from politics, concentrating instead on community service. “But somewhere along the way it clicked for me that some of the best ways to fix these social problems is through politics, through policy. People say, ‘I hate politics,’ I answer. ‘We all hate politics but that’s not the point.’”

TCC Northeast and TCC Southeast may have set the pace, but the other campuses were catching on and catching up. Still, student civic engagement was here and there, bits and pieces, fits and starts with no real cohesion. Coppola saw the need for a District committee. “The faculty knew one another,” he said, “so we pulled a group together and talked about how to introduce this. They had some fabulous ideas as to how to get students involved and how to get disciplines outside of Government and History involved—biology for climate change, for instance.”

The committee now has representatives from all six campuses who meet to share ideas that are developed into

recommendations sent forward to the Chancellor’s Office for approval.

The committee’s work resulted in TCC winning the 2022 Eduardo J. Padron Award for Institutional Transformation given annually by Campus Compact. While TCC Southeast was designated as the winning institution, the nomination narrative, compiled by Foust, included measures undertaken at the District level, such as creation of a civic engagement web page, a Districtwide plan for voter registration and the transmissions of presentations and webinars from the originating campus to all others.

“Every issue, but also every accomplishment, is a College one. It’s not the campus,” Coppola said, adding that the recommendations from the civic engagement work team are not intended to shackle campus creativity. “It’s an umbrella. The work group sets the baseline, but we have six campuses that serve different populations. So, what might be civic engagement for TCC South in areas of Fort Worth might be different than what it is to us in Arlington.”

It’s also different from student to student. After all, “engagement” is a fluid term. It can mean staffing a voter registration booth, making a video, working at a food pantry, chairing a committee. On the other hand, it can be an individual journey, with students such as TCC Northwest’s Natalie Tajada asking questions and seeking information to make informed choices in the voting booth.

Tajada cast her first vote in the 2020 presidential election, troubled by factions and polarization. “I just wanted to try to make a difference,” she said.

Her horizons broadened while working on campus for Coordinator of Special Projects Lou Davenport, who urged her to think about expanding her votes to local and state races. “I decided to really try to educate myself and go out and vote to make a difference locally,” she said. “You have leaders at school and at work and then you go beyond that and wonder, who’s leading this society? Who’s making these rules we must follow?”

TCC student Jeni Green began her engagement in high school as a member of her campus’ student council and the Key Club; she continued her involvement at TCC Southeast with membership in the Student Government Association as well as the Phi Theta Kappa and Sigma Delta Kappa honor societies. She’s handed out donuts to promote voter registration, helped organize a Socktober socks drive for Mission Arlington and set up an umbrella drive benefiting Arlington ISD’s Kookan Educational Center for early childhood development.

Community engagement is one way, Green said, to get your name out there—not her name, TCC’s name. “Having people in the community know who you are means a lot,” she said. “It’ll be something they look at positively so that, when you approach them for other things, they’re more likely to



want to help with those things, as well.”

Yes, there are personal benefits. “I’ve gotten to build skills that will go with me for the rest of my life,” Green shared, “My communication skills and level of professionalism have increased through my involvement with different organizations, and it’s helped me with my sense of empathy on different subjects. It’s caused me to do more research on diverse ways I can help my community.”

TCC’s civic engagement awareness isn’t directed only at students. Workshops, teaching materials, video presentations and other resources have been made available to faculty from all disciplines along with samples showing how civic engagement can be promoted in areas as diverse as Culinary Arts and Physical Education.

Civic engagement also isn’t directed only at what goes on outside the campus. “Student government will come to me with changes they want,” Coppola said. “One of them was that they wanted to increase the number of recycling bins or ways to recycle. So, they polled the data, did the research, didn’t come in and just say, ‘We need more bins.’”

Plans are well underway for a voter registration program leading up to the fall 2022 election, but that’s just a beginning. “Registering students to vote is just what we do—what we’ve always done,” Coppola said. “We look at civic engagement as more of an awareness of how you make change. How can you make change in your community without a riot or anything?”

“There is a method, a political method, to make change—to have individuals understand that yes, have a voice,” he continues. “And with the little bit we give them here, when they leave us and are approached with something they don’t feel is right, they know how to responsibly address that issue rather than be reactive to it.”

Green agrees. “It might not seem important to them at the moment,” she said of fellow students, “but in the grand scheme of things, getting their voice out there can help them be better aligned with their moral compass and the things they believe in. It can help them influence others positively and will help them feel like they’ve made an impact on their community.”

**Information on TCC’s commitment to civic engagement may be found at: <https://www.tccd.edu/civicengagement>**



**Registering students to vote is just what we do—what we’ve always done. But we look at civic engagement as more of an awareness of how you make change.**

Bill Coppola,  
President, TCC Southeast







# NURTURING A GREENER FUTURE

TAKING TCC'S SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES  
TO THE NEXT LEVEL

By Alexis Patterson



# SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

**A**t Tarrant County College, going green started with the color blue.

Fifteen years ago, a recycling program—with bright blue bins dotting campus grounds and buildings—became the first official sustainability initiative in the TCC District. Plastic bags, batteries, cups, cans: Many items once tossed into garbage cans began to get diverted to recycling facilities. “We save tons of garbage going into landfills every year,” shares Margaret Lutton, the College’s executive director of Institutional and Strategic Development. “We have great buy-in, largely because we use single-stream recycling. Students, faculty, staff and visitors don’t have to separate different types of recyclable materials. They just toss and go. And our

the Real Estate and Facilities division, the master plan will ensure the commitment permeates every aspect of TCC’s operations and culture. “The master plan was requested by the Board of Trustees, which recognized a need to focus and formalize sustainability efforts across the District into a ‘One College’ approach,” explains Walter Williams, director of Facilities Engineering and the sustainability program manager. “This approach will facilitate proper support from the College leadership, taking sustainability to a new level across all our campuses and facilities.”

The plan is divided into three phases. The first phase is scheduled to be finalized this fall, and the next phases are set to be complete in fall 2023 and fall 2024,



participation keeps growing.”

While recycling remains a key aspect of TCC’s pledge to lessen environmental impact, the College’s sustainability programs have transformed to become fully comprehensive, higher priority and more technologically advanced. There is also an increasing number of campus- and student-driven sustainability projects. These combined efforts produce a host of benefits—for the environment, the TCC community and local taxpayers.

## THE WAY FORWARD

The College is in the process of categorizing, analyzing and expanding this work through the development of the Sustainability Master Plan. While TCC’s earliest sustainability projects primarily involved

respectively. The plan’s development incorporates input from students, faculty and staff, gathered through visioning sessions, focus groups, workshops and surveys.

**Phase I:** This phase covers physical plant and facilities projects, with a focus on energy savings, water conservation and green building principles. The College’s involvement with green building began shortly after the creation of the recycling program. In 2008, TCC purchased the former RadioShack corporate campus, a 37-acre site featuring state-of-the-art technology, architecture and infrastructure, located on the banks of the Trinity River in downtown Fort Worth. It became TCC Trinity River—and TCC’s first campus to be recognized through LEED, a worldwide green building rating system.



LEED certification indicates that a facility's design, construction and operation help protect and restore water resources, biodiversity and ecosystems; promote use of sustainable materials; reduce carbon footprint; and promote health and quality of life, among other goals. The system rates projects as Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum.

"The former RadioShack headquarters was LEED Silver. That really got us into the idea of green building," says Lutton. "Then we built a LEED Gold building at

construction and their mechanical, electrical and plumbing projects," Lutton remarks. "These are advanced systems that will be extremely efficient and have a long life cycle. It's both environmentally sound and fiscally responsible."

On all campuses, TCC has worked hard to modernize energy systems and conserve water. Conservation programs include watering plants only to the level they need to survive, using detention ponds for irrigation and retrofitting low-flow fixtures in virtually all restrooms. The College

says Lutton. "We want to extend water conservation and preservation beyond our campuses and into the community." For this work, TCC has won the SmartWater Award in the City of Fort Worth's Environmental Excellence Awards for the last nine years in a row.

The College also has invested heavily in improving heating and cooling plants in the past decade. "We're making sure our building automation systems actually do what they're intended to do," states Williams. "That makes our heating



TCC Southeast followed by a LEED Platinum building at TCC South, and we learned which LEED elements are most effective for TCC. Whatever projects we undertake, whether we go through LEED certification or not, will incorporate those elements."

Those elements are a major factor in the current rebuilding of the College's Northwest and Southeast campuses, a component of the bond package passed in 2019. "We've done a lot in terms of sustainability with Northwest and Southeast

also has installed motion-sensing faucets, a change that saves water (and is more hygienic, an important benefit during the pandemic).

In addition, the College's Environmental Management department has long worked to educate students and employees on stormwater pollution prevention in local rivers and streams. "We've had booths at campus fairs and put up flyers, sharing information about the dangers of letting potentially toxic substances run off into drains,"

and cooling more effective and efficient and generates significant savings without large capital investment." The conversion of fluorescent lighting to energy-saving LED lighting across the District has further reduced energy needs while enhancing the learning environment.

All these efforts have had a substantial effect. TCC's water consumption—and thus its purchase of water from local municipalities—has decreased by 44 percent in the past 10 years. In that same



# SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

time, TCC's energy use index (a common metric that indicates relative electricity and natural gas use efficiency) has dropped by 46 percent. TCC continues to search for ways to conserve water and energy while maximizing cost savings.

**Phase II:** The next portion of the Sustainability Master Plan involves College planning and daily operations. Williams says a portion of Phase II involves evaluating current programs—such as recycling and fleet management—to determine

fertilizing on the grounds side. In terms of housekeeping, this phase of the plan could outline the use of green cleaning products as well as overhaul our cleaning schedule.”

The accelerating use of data made available from TCC's Smart Building Program will advance all sustainability efforts, including the cleaning schedule Williams mentions. “There may be some classrooms that are cleaned more frequently than they are used,” he says. “By using occupancy data, we

even learning objectives with TCC's commitment to environmental stewardship. “We want to fill that gap,” says Williams. To do so, the College may consider expanding the availability of classes that train students for careers related to sustainability and the environment—whether that's for a program already taught, such as biology, water resources technician studies and renewable energy technology, or developing programs that reflect new green careers. The College also



if there are now better ways to achieve identified goals.

College staff also will develop additional ideas for infusing sustainability into planning and operations. “This could possibly include converting TCC's fleet to electric vehicles and developing a process for ensuring our College purchases include more green products,” suggests Williams. “We'll also be looking at what we do in terms of our grounds and housekeeping. It could lead to more organic pest treatments and

may be able to reduce labor and use of cleaning chemicals.”

**Phase III:** The third phase of the master plan covers instruction and engagement. Projects will include the expansion of learning opportunities as well as enhanced communication with students, employees and the community, intended to create a deeper understanding of sustainability and greater awareness of TCC's efforts.

A recent Collegewide survey revealed an opportunity to more closely align course offerings and

will explore the value and viability of integrating certain sustainability knowledge and information in other, more tangential fields of study.

The sustainability survey also led to the engagement portion of this phase. “We've made measurable progress that the College can be proud of and are building a strong plan for the future of sustainability at TCC,” Williams notes. “It's important to get the word out about that.”

This phase will focus on supporting student- and employee-



led green projects and initiatives happening at the various TCC campuses. “It’s terrific that our students, faculty and staff are getting involved, and we intend to support those grass-roots efforts at all campuses and facilities,” Williams states. “This is about connecting the dots on a District level.”

### CAMPUS-LEVEL IMPACT

Students and employees who have devoted their time to sustainability programs are eager to collaborate

planning future projects. “We want to expand our work,” Ertle states, “and help the people on our campus get involved, even in simple ways.”

After learning some people weren’t sure what kinds of items were able to be recycled on campus, the sustainability committee created and shared a short, funny video to address the questions. “Drama students volunteered to star in the video and our campus president, Dr. [Bill] Coppola, even made his debut,” says Ertle. She and other committee

access to fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition, there is an aquaponics system that cultivates water-based plants and provides a place to raise aquatic animals such as fish, crayfish and prawns. The campus is an affiliate of Bee Campus USA, so the committee also ensures the presence of pollinator-friendly plans and raises awareness of the importance of bees to the ecosystem.

Dozens of TCC Southeast students also play a role in sustainability on campus and in



with their counterparts on other campuses. “Coordinating our work will allow us to bring new ideas to Southeast Campus, and we can share what we’re doing,” says Laurie Ertle, an assistant professor of biology at TCC Southeast and chair of the campus’ sustainability committee.

Formed in 2014, the committee consists primarily of Southeast staff and faculty from various departments and disciplines. Meeting multiple times a semester, members devise ways to support current campus sustainability initiatives while

members are now putting together an informational resource to indicate community locations where people can dispose of certain items such as toner cartridges and pharmaceutical drugs, so they don’t contaminate the water system and cause pollution.

TCC Southeast’s sustainability committee also supports an on-campus community garden. The garden is divided into plots that student clubs, academic departments and even individuals can rent to grow food for their own consumption or to donate to those without dependable

Tarrant County through the new Environmental Club, established in fall 2021. “I’ve always been interested in the environment, so that’s why I joined,” says Jason Rodriguez, a freshman studying information technology. “It’s been great to make friends and connect with people who share that interest.”

One of the club’s ongoing projects is helping the sustainability committee maintain the garden and weed it. It’s been a big job lately, according to Celeste Ortega-Rodriguez, a TCC Southeast biology instructor,



# SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

sustainability committee member and advisor to the Environmental Club. “In the early part of the pandemic, everything was online, so no one was really on campus to tend to the garden,” Ortega-Rodriguez points out. “It was in disrepair, but we were excited to tackle the challenge of cleaning it up.”

The fresh produce grown by the club is given to the on-campus food pantry. Club members have collected gently used clothes to donate, and they are planning an Arbor Day event

positive impact on the environment after they graduate,” she smiles. “The students’ enthusiasm fuels me to do more too.”

Club members appreciate the Collegewide commitment to better environmental practices. “Taking care of the Earth is an important value,” says Rodriguez. “It’s great to see so many people come together to support that.”

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Even as TCC works to complete

right systems, modern systems that conserve resources and save time and manpower.”

TCC’s sustainability experts know that it is relatively easy to put in place physical projects such as updated heating and cooling equipment. The bigger cultural shift—getting more and more people to understand the profound importance of sustainability and participate in green initiatives—will no doubt take more time. Step by step and day by day, though, progress is happening.

that will include selling unneeded geodes provided by the Geology Department—in both cases, ensuring those items can be reused and not just thrown away. Members also volunteer in the community; they helped at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas this spring. “We’re always looking for more projects,” says Rodriguez.

The commitment of the club’s members to bettering the world around them inspires advisor Ortega-Rodriguez. “I’m really proud of them, and I know they’ll continue to have a

the master plan document, it won’t ever truly be finished, Williams says. “The plan will morph over time. We have to ensure it continues to line up with the College’s overall strategic objectives. Technology and scientific knowledge will advance, and that could change our plan and how we accomplish the goals.”

Still, the commitment to sustainability will remain. “Caring for our environment is important, and so is being a good steward to taxpayer dollars,” observes Lutton. “Millions of dollars can be saved with the

“Even small, individual contributions make an impact,” emphasizes Rodriguez, the student who belongs to TCC Southeast’s Environmental Club. “And when you share what you’re doing, talk about it with others, the cause just gets bigger. And that’s how we’ll really change things.”

**Learn more about sustainability initiatives at TCC Southeast:**  
<https://www.tccd.edu/sustainability>



# GETTING HELP WHEN HELP IS NEEDED

WHEN LIFE OVERWHELMS, TCC COUNSELORS PROVIDE MORE THAN JUST ACADEMIC GUIDANCE

By Kendra Prince

Considering the stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not surprising that demand for college counseling services nationwide has continued to grow. While the number of students seeking counseling services steadily increased over the years prior to the pandemic, according to a survey conducted in the fall of 2020 by the Hi, How Are You Project and the American Campus Communities, 85 percent of students surveyed showed they are somewhat or considerably more stressed now in comparison to previous years. In the same survey, 66 percent of students said COVID-19 has forced them to take a closer look at their mental health.

These statistics are similar to what the TCC Northwest Advising and Counseling Center is reporting. According to Assistant Director Anna Hinman, their center saw 96 students during the Aug. 1, 2019 - Jan. 31, 2020 (pre-COVID) period. The same timeframe two years later showed a 54 percent increase in students seeking counseling with the highest jump in crisis counseling (45 students as opposed to eight students two years earlier).

Hinman says issues they are seeing in students include stress, anxiety and lack of motivation. She attributes the increase in numbers not only to COVID

but also “a generation of students that are not hindered by stigmas surrounding seeking help for mental health issues.”

The increase in students seeking counseling support is not limited to TCC Northwest. “We are seeing a lot of trauma-related issues—some related to COVID and some not,” said Masika Smith, counselor at TCC Northeast. “We are helping students through the grieving process after dealing with death more than in the past, whether death is from COVID or not.” Additionally, Smith says her campus’s counselors are seeing much higher numbers of students with anxiety. “They have been traumatized because of COVID [and have] fears of getting sick again or being in lockdown again.” She gave an example of a student who is now afraid to leave home and no longer drives. “This student was unable to enroll this semester because the online classes were full, and they are not able to leave their home due to their anxiety.”

Steve Howard, who also provides counseling at TCC Northeast, says he is “seeing at least one student a week who is dealing with dysfunctional coping—self-medicating with alcohol, drugs and/or polyamorous sexual relationships.” Additionally, he has weekly conversations with students who are having suicidal



thoughts and wondering if that is normal. “They are alarmed by their thoughts and wanting to talk about it,” he said. “This was *not* a weekly occurrence prior to the pandemic.” Caregiving is another issue. “We are seeing an increase in the number of young students who are caring for a parent or sibling and are having to take fewer classes at a time because they have to work and care for that family member. They are tired.”

Smith believes counseling is integral to student success. “In the classroom, our faculty members recognize when there is a change in student behavior, and we are very fortunate to have them walk students to us, to email the student and copy us as a way of making an introduction or completing a CARE Team referral to make sure someone is reaching out to the student. Here at TCC Northeast we have a great relationship with our faculty working hand-in-hand for student success.”

Functions of CARE Teams include **consultation, assessment, resources** and **education**. A dedicated group of faculty and staff provide consultations and support for students in distress. The teams, each made up of a cross section of the campus community, meet weekly to discuss referrals from concerned faculty, staff and students. Their goal is to help students find support from appropriate sources and, ultimately, provide them the tools achieve their educational goals.

“Our CARE Teams are much more than a behavior intervention team, as we not only assess each referral for risk, but also discuss available campus and community resources,” said Belinda Lopez, director of student conduct and prevention education at TCC South. “Each CARE Team has members from departments at every campus, allowing us to provide comprehensive assessments and resources to mitigate the different barriers our students experience, and bringing them closer to reaching their educational goals.”

“TCC CARE Teams play a vital role in meeting the needs of our students in a particular moment,” said Leon Minor, director of student conduct and prevention education at TCC Northwest, “but also provide assistance and resources that promote continued growth and development.”

CARE Teams across the District received 486 referrals during the fall semester of 2021. Ronda Isaacs, interim director of counseling and advising at TCC Northeast, says their CARE Team referrals increased by 10 percent in the fall of 2021. Even with a decrease in enrollment, counselors stay busy. “The counseling team here at Northeast stays booked with counseling appointments whereas in the past, they had the ability to also assist with advising appointments,” Isaacs said.

“We offer amazing workshops, (but) students don’t typically attend. They are over Zoom, Teams and workshops,” said Smith, “they crave the personalized interaction.”

An individualized approach is essential to counseling success, according to Lidia Narvaez, who serves as a veterans counselor at TCC Northeast. “As counselors, we all take a holistic approach as to how best to serve each student. We try to look at every aspect: physical, mental and spiritual.” She considers this particularly important with veteran students because some of them have had “experiences they may not have processed yet, and the loss of certainty and continuous stress have brought some of these back to the forefront of their mind.”

According to Howard, “The complexity of the situations (with which students are dealing) has greatly increased and require more visits. The number of students we have seen has increased. The number of counselors serving our students has not.”

Still, TCC counselors are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure students have the support they need. “We know how to get you connected to resources that can,” said Hinman.

“Don’t give up on counseling,” added Narvaez. “If you didn’t click with the counselor, ask for another counselor. We have to make sure people know how to advocate for themselves.” She says to keep trying until you find a counselor with whom you are comfortable, then get the help you need.

“Like everyone, college students face difficult life transitions and circumstances, experience painful emotions and need assistance in developing clear and meaningful goals,” said Deidra Turner, director of counseling at TCC Trinity River. “Taking time to meet with a counselor to process these issues should be seen in the same light as exercising and eating healthy meals because it is just as beneficial.”

***For information on counseling services offered by TCC: <https://www.tccd.edu/counseling>***







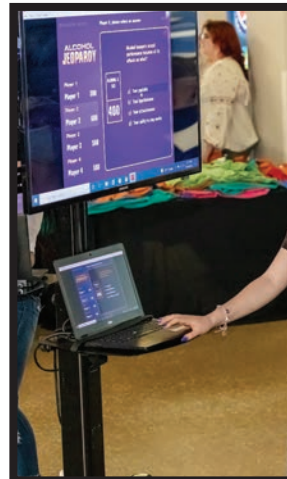
# DODGING DANGER

## DISTRICT INITIATIVE ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO THINK BEFORE THEY ACT

By Kendra Prince

The statistics are alarming. According to a report compiled by the Addiction Group, in 2018, 45 percent of college students used an illicit drug and 28 percent participated in binge drinking. As many as 27 percent of women and up to 8 percent of men have experienced sexual assault in college. In the report, “Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus,” research indicates more than 60 percent of college students have been sexually harassed. Additionally, 25 percent of college students report being bullied. And according to InsideHazing.com, up to 5 percent of all college students admit to being hazed.

In the fall of 2016, TCC Southeast launched the DASHH (Drugs, Alcohol, Sex, Harassment and Hazing) Initiative to promote healthy behaviors among students through campuswide educational programming. Members of the DASHH committee (known as the DASHH Squad) include Student Conduct and Prevention Education, Student Activities, Student Support Services, Student





Government Association, Counseling Center, Health Services, Campus Police and the Victim Advocacy Unit.

The DASHH Squad helms programs and events throughout the year, including National Hazing Prevention Week; Domestic Violence Awareness Week; National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week; Stalking Awareness and Prevention Month; Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month are recognized by the DASHH Squad. Programming is developed to promote these events.

The activities were so successful that DASHH earned TCC Southeast a Chancellor's Award, became a Districtwide initiative and expanded to include Suicide Prevention Month, Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month, National Drugs and Alcohol Facts Week and Red Ribbon Week to highlight the destruction caused by the use of illicit drugs.

The objectives of the DASHH programming include equipping students to identify and access on- and off-campus resources, and applying knowledge to make healthy life choices related to alcohol, drugs, sexual behavior and hazing. DASHH also helps students develop attitudes, skills and knowledge that will empower them to take actions that ensure the safety and well-being of themselves and others.

"DASHH events range from fun and interactive to workshops, even 'passive' programming," said Kecia Baker-Morris, director of student conduct and prevention education at TCC Southeast. The committee has hosted more than 110 students at an Alcohol Jeopardy event and more than 200 students, staff and faculty at a program on human trafficking.

Baker-Morris says her team is in the process of assessing results of the programming. "We are noticing that we do have repeat students to our events," she said. "Also, we see a lot of DASHH shirts around campus. Of course, you really don't know if the preventive measures worked until a student is faced with the situation."

Student Temiloluwa Sorunke volunteered at DASHH events in fall 2021, crediting the games played with making

students more aware of the effects of drugs, alcohol, sex, harassment and hazing.

Volunteers also have the opportunity to hone their own knowledge and skills. Student Jeni Green, who worked at a trivia game that promoted understanding of the risks of alcohol, competed alongside her friends when her shift was over. "Both my friends and I were shocked at our lack of knowledge regarding alcohol," she said. "Many of us realized we had heard alcohol myths and misinformation from our friends. A lot of people got involved due to the fun format and incentives for students to participate. It was an extremely informative experience." Green said she appreciated that both safety while using alcohol and risks of overusing alcohol were addressed rather than just telling students not to drink, which she believes would not be as effective.

"I also appreciate DASHH's events that share information and awareness about domestic violence," said Green. "As someone who is a domestic violence survivor and had to go through years of court battles for my abuser to be prosecuted, the knowledge being spread on my campus mattered deeply to me. DASHH is an amazing organization that allows people to openly talk about things and gives students a safe environment to ask questions without judgment."

Student Jamea Johnson first got involved with DASHH during the alcohol dangers trivia event, and later participated in a similar game that promoted safe sexual behaviors. "The entire concept of these events is they are meant to remind us that eagerness should not take precedence over safety," said Johnson. "We'd like to think that we're mature enough to handle sex, alcohol, parties and drugs, but most of us have got it so wrong!" She continues, "DASHH kind of forces us to remember that we're human. It reminds us to think before we drink and drive, to use protection and to think about the consequences of our actions."

***For more information regarding the DASHH Initiative, email [dashh@tccd.edu](mailto:dashh@tccd.edu).***



**DRUGS | ALCOHOL | SEX | HARASSMENT | HAZING**

**D.A.S.H.H.**  
*Southeast Prevention Squad*

# FEEDING STUDENT SUCCESS

## FIGHTING FOOD INSECURITY IN NORTH TEXAS

By Reginald Lewis

**T**hough students may face numerous challenges during their higher education journeys, hunger should never be one of them. Unfortunately, food insecurity is one of the leading public health challenges on college and university campuses.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), food insecurity is defined as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle. A recent survey of 195,000 students conducted by the Hope Center for College, Community and Justice found that 38 percent of students attending two-year colleges and 29 percent of students at four-year schools reported experiencing food insecurity in the previous 30 days.

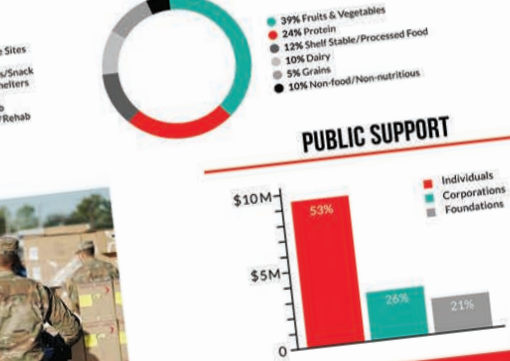
Food insecurity can significantly impact a student's ability to persevere in their education and reach their goals. Research shows that many college students experience shame and mental health issues in connection to food insecurity. To combat this problem, TCC currently offers several resources that address basic needs, underscoring the College's commitment to serving all students and supporting their academic success. One of the key ways TCC works to alleviate hunger is through the operation of food pantries at TCC Northeast, South and Southeast campuses. Research shows that many college students experience shame and mental health issues in connection to food insecurity.







Annual Report | FY 2020



**VOLUNTEERS**

There were significant reductions in volunteer support throughout this year, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Special thanks to the National Guard for their help filling this gap and ensuring the success of our mission.

visit **Tarrant Area Food Bank** at <https://tafb.org/> and read the <https://tafb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AnnualReport-FY2020.pdf>

For more information, contact [edward.brassart@tccd.edu](mailto:edward.brassart@tccd.edu)

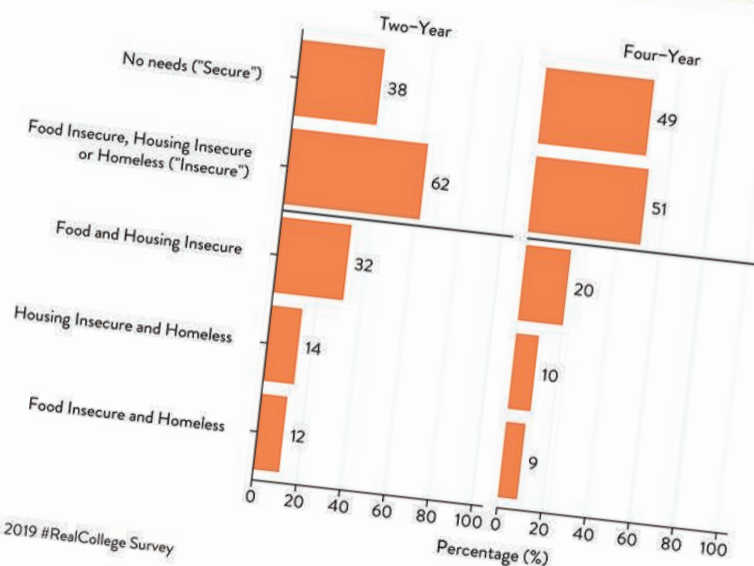
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## College Students Facing Food and Housing Insecurity | A Report from the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice

The **Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice** has administered their #RealCollege survey at two- and four-year colleges and universities since 2015 in order to evaluate access to affordable food and housing among college students. In February 2020, they released a report of 2019 survey findings as well as five years of cumulative knowledge gained in surveys over the past five years. Figure 9 in this report describes how reports of food insecurity, housing insecurity and homelessness differ between students at two-year and four-year institutions.

**FIGURE 9. Intersections of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among Survey Respondents by Sector**



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

To read this report visit the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at [https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019\\_RealCollege\\_Survey\\_Report.pdf](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019_RealCollege_Survey_Report.pdf)

To learn more about how basic needs challenges impact college students explore the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at <https://hope4college.com/>

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**Any student or employee who needs help meeting their food needs to any degree should consider visiting the food pantry. They can do anything from grocery shopping for the week to help feed their family, to grabbing a nutritious snack during the school day if they're hungry.**

Cheryl North  
Founder, TCC Northeast Food Pantry



Students (from any campus) who find themselves food insecure can visit one of the three food pantries offering free food assistance during the week.

Food pantry operators hope to raise awareness about these important campus resources. “Most students learn about the pantry through faculty members who tell them or make a classroom announcement,” said Cheryl North, founder of the campus food pantry and sociology instructor at TCC Northeast. “They also learn about the pantry through new student orientation, campus flyers, word of mouth, campus events, the TCC website and numerous articles that have run in The Collegian [TCC’s student-run newspaper].”

Launched in 2016, TCC Northeast’s food pantry was the first such resource in the District. It offers various goods—fresh and frozen items—free of charge to visitors.

“Any student or employee who needs help meeting their food needs to any degree should consider visiting the food pantry,” said North. “They can do anything from grocery shopping for the week to help feed their family, to grabbing a nutritious snack during the school day if they’re hungry.”

If students are unable to visit the food pantry during operating hours, they can drop by the distribution desk in the library to pick up a sack lunch. This gives students access to the food they need to live a healthy life.

Donations from the campus community and area partners go a long way in helping stock the shelves. For example, student organizations will fundraise or host an event to benefit the pantry. The food pantry also receives

donations from local churches, civic organizations and community partners. Additionally, thanks to TCC Northeast’s ongoing relationship with Tarrant Area Food Bank (TAFB), students and others can visit the fresh food market held on the first Tuesday of every month in the Student Center. This market helps ensure access to fruits and vegetables, which are harder to store in traditional pantry locations.

Together, these resources make a significant difference. “Across the District, we have thousands of students who rely on our pantries either to help provide nutritious meals to them and their families or to make sure they are not facing hunger as they go about their school day,” said North. “We provide a safety net, and therefore stability of food supply, which helps to alleviate a large concern that many of our students face. In this way we promote student success by addressing this area of stress in their lives and allowing them to focus on their education.”

Students interested in giving back can volunteer in the food pantries and receive service-learning hours for their work. In fact, many TCC students complete their service learning for class projects in the food pantry.

Students visiting TCC South’s food pantry, located in the Student Center, can find snack and grocery items, toiletries, personal hygiene items and school supplies. The food pantry’s primary support comes from donations provided by campus faculty, staff and area nonprofits and other partners.

“We continue to receive canned goods, but students





**Now students can focus on their academics without worrying about how they are going to get food on the table.**

Doug Peak, Director of Student Development Services, TCC Southeast

who come in for lunch need quick-fix meals,” said Allison Knott, coordinator of the Family Empowerment Center at TCC South. “We will continue our efforts to get certain items the students have either expressed interest in or could benefit from being stocked in our pantry.”

The TCC South food pantry currently serves approximately 25 people every month, yet they have the capacity to serve more.

“Although the TCC South food pantry is seeing increasing numbers in visits, there are a couple reasons students may be hesitant to visit more regularly,” said Knott. “As a college student, when it seems as though your peers have it better than you, you do not want your insecurities to be visible. It intensifies the shame a student feels. We are striving daily to create a warm, welcoming environment in the food pantry, so students know we care and support them.”

The food pantry at TCC Southeast is set up like a grocery store, where students can visit and shop for a variety of things that they need, not just food. “This made the load of figuring out how to get food or basic household items a little easier,” said Doug Peak, director of student development services. “Now students can focus on their academics without worrying about how they are going to get food on the table.”

Each week, approximately 110 people visit the food pantry. Understanding that anyone may be dealing with hunger, the campus also allows TCC employees to visit the pantry for food assistance.

A collaboration with the culinary and dietetics

departments continues to deliver additional value to people visiting the food pantry at TCC Southeast. For example, culinary students pack fresh snacks for pantry shoppers and the Dietetics program hosts food demonstrations during the semester. For example, they’ve taught students about healthy snacks and, how to cook a healthy pasta dinner.

In addition to the brick-and-mortar food pantry, TCC Southeast partners with Arlington Charities to bring mobile food markets to the campus on the third Friday of each month.

### **Community Food Markets at TCC Northwest**

TCC Northwest offers students, employees and members of the public an opportunity to shop for free at a monthly Community Food Market, hosted in partnership with TAFB and Community Link, a food bank serving northwest Fort Worth. Typically staffed by 15 to 20 TCC volunteers, this mobile market provides fresh produce and proteins at not cost. The market, typically held on the third Friday of each month, serves roughly 300 families at each opening. Attendees, who bring their own bags and carts to transport their items, are not required to prove need or income.

***For additional information about the food pantries or Community Food Market—or to ask about donations, please visit: <https://www.tccd.edu/foodpantries/>***

# GETTING INSIDE INFORMATION

SEVEN INTERVIEWS, SEVEN JOB OFFERS,  
TCC GRADUATES ARE IN HIGH DEMAND FOR MANY HEALTH CARE JOBS

By Bill Lace

**A**s her May 2021 graduation from TCC Trinity River's Radiologic Technology program grew closer, Rachel Seidel went into big-time job-hunting mode. Jobs had been scarce when she left the military years before, so she was determined to send out as many applications as necessary.

"I applied to seven places," she said. "I thought I might get a couple of callbacks, but every one of them called back, and I thought, 'OK, I need to stop applying.'"



The seven callbacks quickly became seven interviews and then seven job offers. "There was a lot to think about," she said. "Commute, salary, benefits, working hours."

She chose Texas Health Resources Harris Methodist Hospital. The salary was much higher than she had anticipated when she entered the program, and THR even threw in a signing bonus.

Seidel's story reflects both the quality of TCC's health science programs and the current shortage of trained technicians. "With the ever-evolving state of health care, the current job market is flourishing with opportunities for TCC students," said Brandon Hernandez, dean of health sciences. "The job market in the DFW area is vibrant, and our students will have several opportunities to put their skills to work quickly."

Seidel chose one of TCC's imaging programs which train students to take images that provide physicians information about the insides of patients' bodies without surgical cuts. Here's a rundown on each program.

**Radiologic Technology:** "Rad Tech" (commonly known as X-ray) is the granddaddy of imaging programs, with the technology dating from the discovery of X-rays in 1895. A year later, they were being used by physicians worldwide. TCC began offering Rad Tech training in 1970; for almost 50 years, it was the College's only imaging program.

"Rad Tech is kind of a first step, and for some people it's their only step and they can have a fulfilling career with it," program coordinator Brian Spence said. "Or they can go into other imaging areas. There are just a million different pathways."

Rad Tech is a good example of how increasingly popular TCC's imaging programs are. Normally, Spence said, 70 to 80 people apply for one of 24 spots,

but last year's applicant pool was 110.

Not only is the competition fierce for admission, but the requirements are equally daunting. Applicants must have a grade point average of at least 2.5 to apply, make a C or better on the notoriously difficult Anatomy and Physiology courses and score a minimum of 70 on the Health Education Systems Inc. (HESI) exam.

Graduate salaries are excellent—just ask Seidel—but there are other attractions. "If somebody loves helping people and likes the idea of working with cutting-edge technology, the program can be attractive to them," Spence said. "It's kind of combination of art, science and medicine."

**Sonography:** The first photograph of people born after 1980 is likely to be a sonogram proudly posted on their parents' refrigerator door. "But we're more than OB-GYN—much more," said Jackie Bennett, who oversees TCC's sonography program. "We can evaluate organs in the abdomen, the pelvis, the vessels in the neck, head, arms and legs."

Even so, she said, at least half of prospective students think sonography is only about moms-to-be and their babies. "When I worked at another institution," Bennett recalled, "a student came in and said that all she wanted was to become an OB-GYN sonographer. She ended up quitting because she didn't realize you have to learn all of it." Of course, that breadth of knowledge ensures students have maximum professional opportunities.





Sonograms may function somewhat like X-rays, but the technology is far different, employing sound waves instead of radiation. These waves are created externally and bounced off internal tissues or organs in much the same manner as the sonar used by ships to detect what's under the water ahead of them. The echoes form a picture of the body tissues on a computer screen.

There are two pathways into TCC's sonography program, which began in 2017. Most students start by taking the required prerequisite courses, with a GPA of at least 2.5, and the HESI exam. Others who already hold licenses in radiography, radiation therapy or nuclear medicine, however, may skip the prerequisites and take only the courses required for a Certificate of Completion rather than the Associate of Applied Science.

As with Rad Tech, far more potential students apply than can be accepted. "Previously, we had about 50 applicants for each cohort of 12 students," Bennett said, "but this last one during the pandemic was 100."

Graduates command good salaries and even sign-on bonuses, she said, and "if you love patient care and you love technology, you won't be bored."

**Nuclear Medicine:** "Nuke Med" is sometimes referred to as "inside-out radiography" because the radioactive material is placed inside the body, and the resulting photon emissions are picked up by external sensing equipment. One such piece of hardware is the gamma camera, named for the gamma rays emitted by the patient. TCC recently purchased a gamma camera with delivery expected during the spring or summer of 2022.

The gamma camera was a big purchase in many ways. Not only did it cost just south of



**If somebody loves helping people and likes the idea of working with cutting-edge technology, the program can be attractive to them. It's kind of combination of art, science and medicine."**

Brian Spence, Program Coordinator, Radiologic Technology

\$300,000, but the equipment weighs almost nine tons. "They decided that maybe nine tons on the fifth floor wouldn't be a real good idea," said program director Tonya Pigulski, "so we decided to put it on the first floor."

The camera can record an image, much like an X-ray, but can also take multiple images that can be compiled by a computer to create three-dimensional data. Multiple images can also show function, such as if a heart is pumping enough blood.

Nuclear medicine can also heal in



addition to providing images. Through a process known as theranostics, one radioactive drug may be delivered intravenously to diagnose a condition such as a tumor and then, if appropriate, a second radioactive dose can be situated to deliver treatment.

Only 15 students can be accepted in each fall semester, and Pigulski cautions applicants to thoroughly investigate nuclear medicine before seeking admission. "I tell them not to choose it just to choose it, but make sure they'll love it," she said. "It's a fantastic field,

but what's even more fascinating to me is that you can get your certification in five semesters at a community college for under \$5,000 and you're coming out as a brand-new graduate making about \$30 per hour."

**Computed Tomography:** Once known as Computed Axial Tomography, or CAT—the acronym that spawned endless jokes involving felines—CT combines multiple X-ray tubes in what resembles a large donut. As patients lie on a gantry and glide slowly through the center hole, the tubes take a series of images or "slices" that are then compiled by computer into a three-dimensional cross section. A neurosurgeon can then, for example, examine the brain layer by layer to detect anomalies.

"CT's fast. It's the modality of choice in trauma medicine," said instructor Dina Sterling. "You can get a head CT done in a matter of minutes depending on the speed of your scanner and how many slices are made. On the other hand, MRI (see description below) is a very long process."

CT is a secondary imaging program in that one must already be licensed in an area such as Rad Tech or Nuke Med. The 16 semester hours are completed in a single semester. Many students opt to tack CT onto their Rad Tech program. They are, if in good standing going into their second year, allowed to take extra courses in CT and then finish up the CT certification in the summer.

Salaries are in the \$75,000 per year range, but Sterling said her students also are attracted by the speed and excitement of working in an emergency room or other high-pressure setting.

#### **Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technology:**

MRI employs a completely different technology than its counterparts, this time using the patient's own magnetic field. "It's like what sonography is,

sending waves toward the body and the waves echo back to us," said instructor Razan Valle. "We all have little baby magnets inside our body because some of our atoms have a charge that creates a magnetic field. We can align those small magnets into a larger field that we can then manipulate to get an image."

MRI is another secondary program whose students must already be licensed in another modality. With that in mind, Valle has structured the program with the working technician in mind. "We offer our classes on weeknights and weekend mornings," she said. "The clinical rotations are set based on each student's hours of availability. We also offer our courses blended or hybrid, so they don't have to come to campus every week."

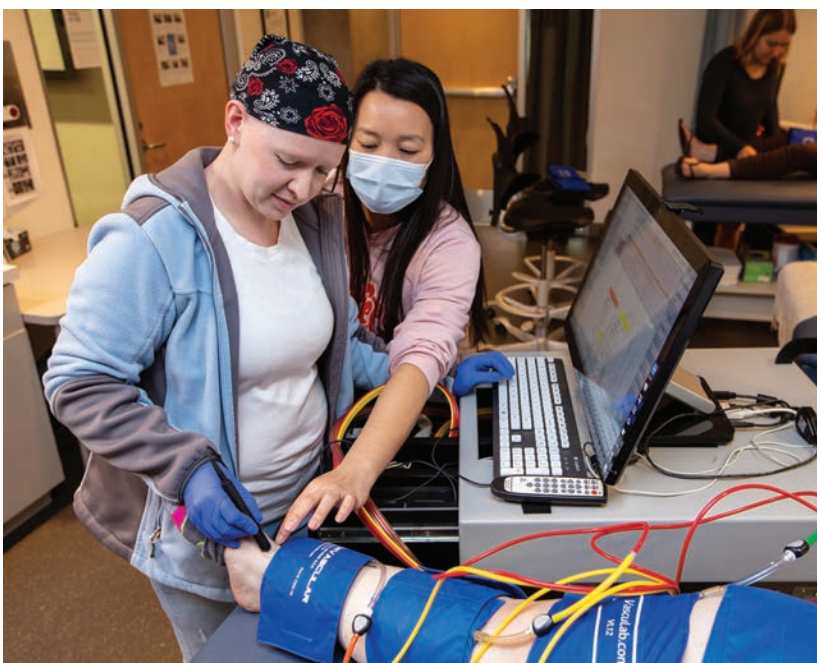
As with all the imaging programs, technology is advancing at a whirlwind pace. "They're always finding new uses," Valle said. "Through spectrography, we can measure various levels of minerals and potassium in the body and in the brain specifically. Microscopy is being able to do pretty much what a microscope does, so we're able to look at tissue at a very cellular level."

Demand is such that the median salary has risen from \$65,000 in 2012 to \$74,000 in 2020. While TCC now requires MRI students to be licensed in another field, that may change. The demand for technicians is so great that employers are increasingly open to hiring people with only MRI certification. "So, there are talks within TCC of expanding into an associate degree program," Valle said.

#### **Vascular Interventional Radiography (VIR):**

"You name it, we can fix it," said instructor Denise Glenn. Hyperbole? Sure, but VIR can be used in many parts of the body to perform a variety of procedures including lazng a clot and sucking it out, stopping a bleed, stenting





a blockage or inserting drainage tubes.

“What we do,” Glenn explained, “is fix everything through a tiny hole in the groin, radial artery or other access points. We do chemoembolizations, too, where we can target a tumor and put in a chemo agent to kill it. It’s like a blend of surgical technology and radiology.”

Students accepted into the VIR program must already have a degree or certificate in radiologic technology. Graduates of the 23-semester-hour course of study receive Advanced Technical Certificates.

“It’s not for everyone,” Glenn said. “It can be overwhelming because you’ve spent a year and a half learning about bones (for X-ray studies) and all of a sudden, I’m going to start throwing the whole cardiovascular system at you.”

Glenn graduated from TCC’s Rad Tech program in 1992 and spent 10 years as an X-ray technician before discovering interventional radiography. “It’s the most awesome job ever,” she said. “We are saving lives. I’m standing next to a physician and what I’m doing is actively helping someone’s life being saved.

“But you get to a point where you really want to give back and it’s time to help these younger ones. Maybe one day when I need some help [as a patient], one of my former students might walk in and I’ll think, ‘OK, good. You know what you’re doing.’”

Despite their advanced technology, high salaries and fulfilling work offered in imaging fields, getting the word out on TCC’s imaging programs to prospective students can be challenging. The pandemic, however, provided some unexpected assistance.

“We do tend to be underplayed in the health care realm,” said Sterling. “Television has a lot to do with it. It tends to highlight the doctor and the nurse and then everyone forgets there is actually a *team* of health care professionals. I watch some of these TV shows and I see X-rays hanging upside down. Is nobody even showing them how to hang X-rays correctly?”

“Unfortunately, our profession is still not as well-known in high school advising,” said Stephanie Holden, the assistant dean to whom the imaging programs report. “So, oftentimes it’s boots on the ground.” The pandemic also provided some unexpected attention on imaging programs. “Perhaps the only positive of COVID was that it highlighted some other health professions besides doctors and nurses,” Spence reflected.

Seidel, meanwhile, is loving her new job, intense though it might be. “It’s a fast-paced area in which to work,” she said. “I work in an emergency room in a very busy hospital and expect a constant flow. You’re never bored. You don’t get to sit down much. You expect to be constantly seeing people, but it’s very rewarding.

“I’m grateful to TCC for preparing me for this field and for making sure that I learned everything I needed to learn. It’s intense, but it’s intense for a reason, and they will not let you fail. I’m so grateful.”

**For information on TCC’s imaging programs, visit:**  
<https://tccd.edu/healthcareprofessions>









# MODERN MEDIA

## TCC STUDENTS IMPACT THEIR WORLD THROUGH MEDIA

By Gina Brasseur

**A**n estimated 720,000 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube every day—some of it good, a lot of it bad. That's because the advancement of modern technology has made media production accessible to more people than ever before. While almost anyone can record a scene or snap a photo with a phone, it takes production skills to produce a professional quality video or podcast. Students in the Radio, Television and Film (RTVF) program at TCC Northeast are learning those professional media production skills from industry insiders. Skills they can use to make an impact on their world.

### INFLUENCING AUDIENCES

Using media to influence an audience is not a new concept. In 1965, children's television show host Soupy Sales told children watching his show to get their parents' wallets and send him "some of those funny green pieces of paper" they would find. While the stunt only netted Sales a few dollars, parents watching the show were

outraged. They worried about the effect that a

broadcast television personality could have on innocent minds.

Fast-forward more than a half-century and media now influences almost everyone's lives, for better or for worse. The invention of cheaper, better and more portable equipment, combined with the availability of online media outlets like YouTube, TikTok, MySpace and Soundcloud has made it possible for almost anyone to become an influencer.

**An influencer is any person who can influence their audience within their niche to buy a product or take an action. Niches can include anything from food, fashion and wellness to alternative news, current affairs and conspiracy theories.**



## DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Since the invention of the radio and television up until the early 2000s, professional broadcasting equipment was large, heavy and extremely expensive. Only TV and radio stations and large corporations could afford it.

“When I did an internship 20-plus years ago, they gave me a BetaCamSP. Everything together weighed 35 pounds,” remembers Chad Jones, RTVF instructor and department coordinator at TCC Northeast. “Today, you get better quality out of something that weighs two-thirds less.”

Jones has spent his career following the evolution of broadcasting. “You may have heard of the digital revolution, the DSLR revolution, in filmmaking and video,” said Jones. “It started about 14 years ago. There was a new still photography camera on the market made by Cannon. As almost an afterthought, they added video recording capability to it. The smaller, more agile camera actually ended up revolutionizing the way video was shot. We start our cinematography students on these Cannon cameras, but then they move up to our many other cameras to practice their craft. Many of our advanced field cameras are feature film quality and are on the list of Netflix-approved cameras.”

RTVF students learn professional skills for a variety of media production styles and platforms. “My ultimate dream is to be a director for animated TV and film,” said student Ellie Breedlove. “But I don’t want to be a director that doesn’t know how to do all the jobs of the crew also. That’s why I’m enjoying this whole program.”

## INDUSTRY INSIDERS

RTVF program instructors come from myriad professional backgrounds: television production, news anchoring, filmmaking and jingle writing. That diversity helps when teaching the students. Throughout the two-year program, students get a well-rounded education in all aspects of media including studio production, field production, audio editing, live show production, studio engineering, floor managing, technical directing, cinematography, lighting, video editing, podcasting, announcing and narration,

scriptwriting, storyboarding, graphic arts, media entrepreneurship and mass media law.

“I want to be a camera operator for the NFL or NHL. I want to aim high and will do whatever it takes to get a job like that,” said student Justin Rohm.

“Hopefully I can take what I learn here and apply it to a career in play-by-play announcing,” said student James Jacobe. “I want to give people a sense of joy and happiness through storytelling with technology.”

## SUCCESS WITHIN REACH

RTVF instructor Darryl Hoelting says they’ve enjoyed a lot of student success with the program. “We have former students who are now working as studio managers, news photographers, production coordinators and more. We’ve also placed a lot of students in internships at The Country Network and at Estrella, a national Latin television network with studios in Dallas.”

Former RTVF student and Venezuelan native Carolina Pereira now anchors several newscasts at the Estrella network. Former RTVF student Chase Boyer has done everything from volunteer media work at his church to full-time videographer at KTUL, the ABC television station in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

“Another student, Noah Tao, was nominated for a Student Academy Award for one of his short films. Still other students have entered their short films into festivals and won,” said Hoelting.

TCCD Instructional Television Manager John Gonzalez serves on the advisory board for the RTVF program. “We’ve had some great RTVF students placed in internships here at the College. When students get real-life experiences, they are better prepared to succeed.”

“One thing we really look at when we get new gear for the program is to make sure it is applicable in the marketplace,” added Jones. “The availability of new media equipment and outlets levels the playing field somewhat. I can’t wait to see what our students do in the future.”

**Learn more about TCC’s RTVF program:**  
<https://tccd.edu/rtvf> or call 817-515-6465.



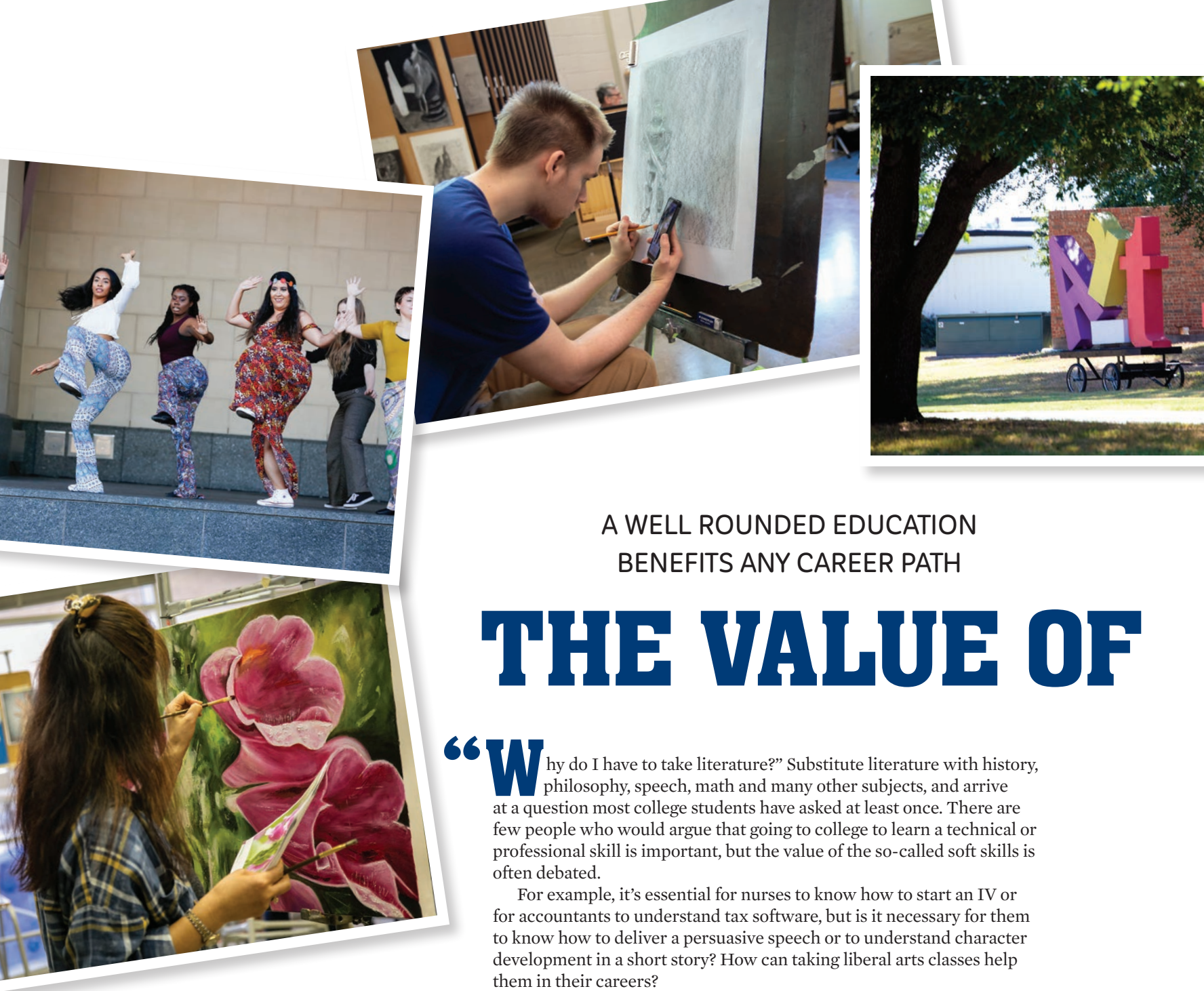


When I did an internship 20-plus years ago, they gave me a BetaCamSP. Everything together weighed 35 pounds. Today, you get better quality out of something that weighs two-thirds less.

Chad Jones, RTVF Department Coordinator







A WELL ROUNDED EDUCATION  
BENEFITS ANY CAREER PATH

# THE VALUE OF

**“W**hy do I have to take literature?” Substitute literature with history, philosophy, speech, math and many other subjects, and arrive at a question most college students have asked at least once. There are few people who would argue that going to college to learn a technical or professional skill is important, but the value of the so-called soft skills is often debated.

For example, it’s essential for nurses to know how to start an IV or for accountants to understand tax software, but is it necessary for them to know how to deliver a persuasive speech or to understand character development in a short story? How can taking liberal arts classes help them in their careers?

The liberal arts are academic subjects such as math, literature, philosophy, mathematics, and social and physical sciences, as well as the creative arts that are studied along with professional or technical subjects in colleges and universities. Liberal arts courses give students opportunities to practice communication and interpersonal skills. They also help students discover different ways of thinking; students may study related ideas in history, literature and art, but each subject approaches the ideas through a different lens. This helps students to develop their critical thinking skills. Liberal arts courses expose students to general knowledge across a wide range of subjects while helping them learn soft skills in the process.

Employers have long recognized the value of soft skills. The annual NACE (the National Association of Colleges and Employers) survey of industry leaders demonstrates this. To wit, the 2021 survey ranks communication, problem solving, and collaboration and teamwork





# LIBERAL ARTS

By Vicki Ansorge, Dean, Humanities Division, TCC South

among the top key attributes employers seek on college graduates' résumés. In fact, the organization reports that eight out of 10 employers are looking for these skills. Other soft skills listed as essential by employers include flexibility, accountability, listening and interpersonal skills. LinkedIn's 2019 *Global Talent Trends* reports that employers say when an employee doesn't work out, it's usually because they lack soft skills.

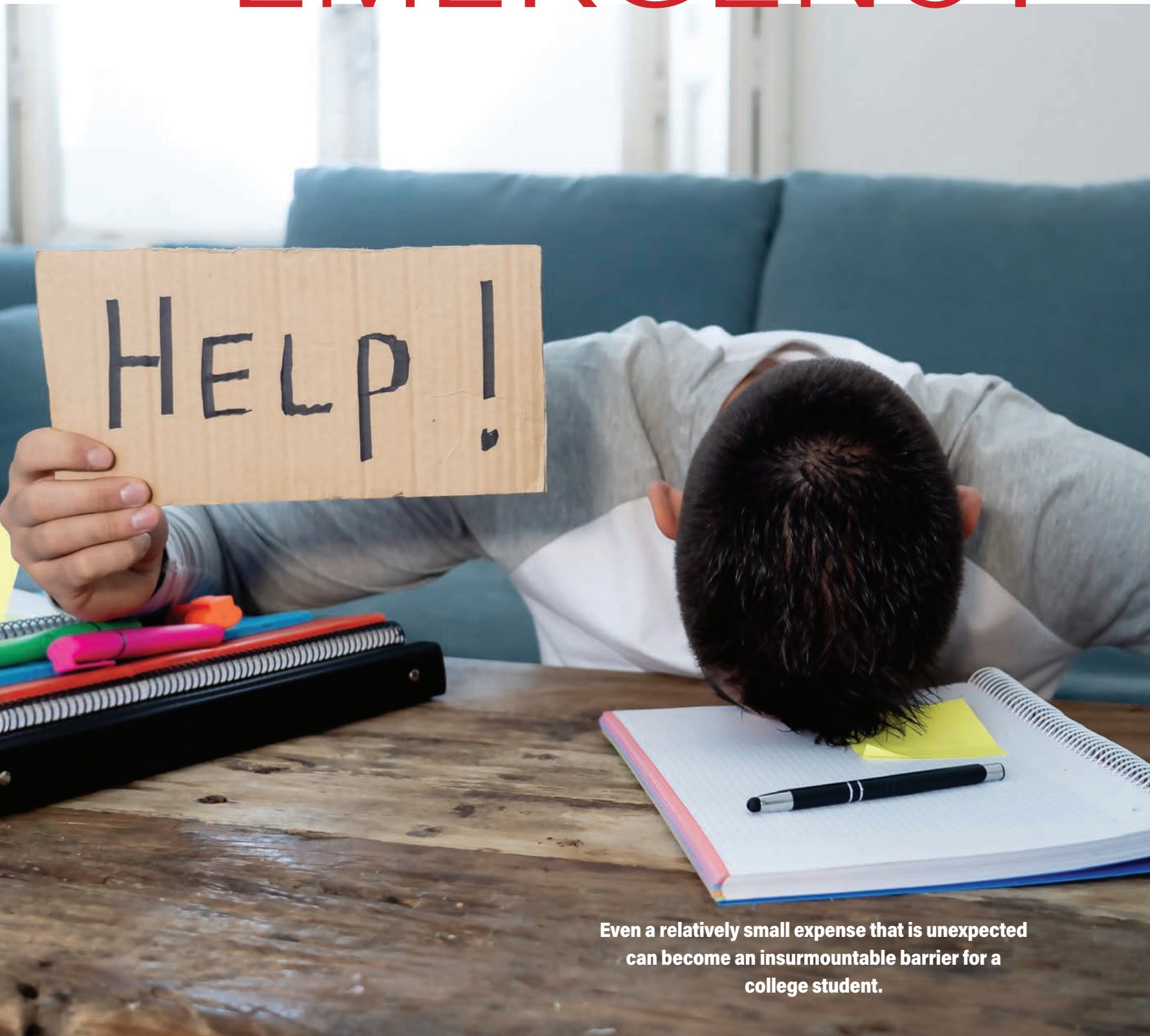
The soft skills learned in liberal arts classes are highly transferable. They are used in every job, from an entry-level position to the executive suite. Soft skills can help advance in one's career, and they are even more important with a new focus on remote work. According to Workable, a recruiting software company, soft skills that help employees succeed "no matter their seniority level, role or industry" have become essential in hiring decisions.

Tarrant County College recognizes the value of critical thinking, communication, empirical and quantitative reasoning, teamwork, social responsibility and personal responsibility, and computer literacy to student success and have woven them into the courses as core learning outcomes. Whether students intend to transfer to a university or to enter the job market after graduation, TCC faculty want them to be prepared. TCC's focus on the soft skills in combination with technical and professional skills answers the question, "What do we want our students to know when they leave here?" It also answers the question, "Why do I have to take literature?"

**For more information on Humanities courses at TCC:**  
<https://tccd.edu/humanities>

**The soft skills learned in liberal arts classes are highly transferable. They are used in every job, from an entry-level position to the executive suite. Soft skills can help advance in one's career, and they are even more important with a new focus on remote work.**

# EMERGENCY



**Even a relatively small expense that is unexpected  
can become an insurmountable barrier for a  
college student.**



# RESPONSE

## WHEN UNEXPECTED FINANCIAL BLOWS COULD CAUSE A STUDENT TO DROP OUT OF COLLEGE, THE TCC FOUNDATION STEPS IN

By Alexis Patterson

**W**ith a dream to open a shop selling pastries and other sweets, Brittany Hudson had a plan for her education at Tarrant County College. First, she studied business, earning her associate degree in 2016. Hudson planned to return to TCC for culinary arts training. After the birth of her son, though, she had a lot on her plate, and it wasn't easy to commit to school again. Then the pandemic hit, complicating things more. But last year, the Mansfield single mom decided it was time to get back to her goal. Hudson arranged to begin culinary classes at TCC Southeast in January 2022. Then everything went wrong.

"My health went downhill," Hudson recalls. "I had to get through those issues, and I suddenly had a lot of medical bills and no insurance." Working only part time, Hudson got behind on payments. On top of that, she had her regular living expenses, costs related to pre-K for her son, and her tuition and fees. While Hudson's federal financial aid was a big help, she ultimately took out another loan to make sure she was covered. The situation left her tapped out financially. Still, Hudson was determined that nothing would stop her, and she was ready to go on day one of the semester.

Then her car stopped working.

"Over the first couple of weeks of school, it was problem after problem," Hudson says. "I had to replace a belt, spark plugs and brake pads. There was an issue with my tires. And then another warning light would come on. I didn't have a good way to get to school. I thought I was going to have to drop my classes."

Something Hudson discovered during her very first class would allow her to continue her studies. At the bottom of a class syllabus, there was a note about TCC's Student Emergency Assistance Fund. That fund would provide just what Hudson needed to get her car fixed—and get to campus without a mid-route breakdown.

### Crisis Intervention

Even a relatively small expense that is unexpected can become an insurmountable barrier for a college student. "Unfortunately, our low-income and first-generation students are often just one minor catastrophe away

from stopping out or dropping out," notes Fred Schmidt, former director of development for the TCC Foundation, a nonprofit organization that exists to raise and distribute funds to support students and critical needs of the College.

A recent survey showed that 54 percent of TCC students ran out of money three or more times in the prior year, and 52 percent showed signs of housing insecurity. A third of students had very low food security, and even more said they pay for their education with credit cards. If they needed \$500 in cash or credit to overcome a crisis in the next month, 61 percent said they'd have trouble getting the money.

With those statistics in mind, the TCC Foundation created the emergency fund, designed to provide grants for one-time, critical needs that could cause a student to stop attending classes. The first awards were given in fall 2019, shortly before the pandemic. Students can now get up to \$500 (with nothing to be repaid) to help with anything from housing problems to transportation difficulties, as Hudson experienced.

"For a lot of people, if their car breaks down, they just call a tow truck, get it fixed," Schmidt says. "But many students can't easily afford to do that. And without a car, they can't go to work, the grocery store or school. At that point, they're truly stuck until they have the necessary funds. And if it takes, say, a couple of weeks, they might feel they miss so much class that they have to drop out. That's where the emergency fund can help."

Another student who received that help is Gia Peters. (Her name has been changed to protect her privacy.) Like Hudson and an increasing number of other fund recipients, it was car trouble that almost derailed Peters. "I woke up one morning to go to class and my car wouldn't turn over," she remembers. "I ended up needing about \$2,000 in repairs. My mom helped me some, but I was still short. In days, the emergency fund had covered the rest of what I needed. It was such a relief."

While award funds come from the TCC Foundation, the responsibility for evaluating and approving requests lies with each campus's CARE team, a dedicated group of faculty and staff members who assist and support



# HELP!

**Since the establishment of the Student Emergency Assistance Fund, the Foundation has provided the College more than \$353,000 in grant funding, which has been dispersed to 745 students.**

students in crisis. The goal is to process emergency assistance applications as rapidly as possible—ideally within a couple of days or even faster, as soon as the crisis and amount requested are verified. Depending on the situation, the College may transfer money to a student's bank account or make a direct payment on their behalf, if an expedited response is warranted. "The plan, to help a student overcome an emergency situation and swiftly get back to their normal routine, is working," Schmidt says.

Since the establishment of the Student Emergency Assistance Fund, the Foundation has provided the College more than \$353,000 in grant funding, which has been dispersed to 745 students. And those students have been highly committed to continuing their education. TCC's average retention rate (which measures students who re-enroll year to year) is 63 percent. While that's already 11 percentage points higher than the current average for community colleges, the retention rate among TCC's emergency assistance grant recipients is significantly better—reaching nearly 81 percent.

"The grant was really easy to apply for, and I was able to still move forward and not drop my classes," Hudson shares. "It actually gave me a push to keep going to get to my next step in life."

### **The Generosity of Others**

The emergency fund is maintained through the generosity of donors. Many College employees are among those who donate, throughout the year and during the TCC Employees Care campaign each October. "They see firsthand the impact this fund has on students' ability to pursue their goals, even when life throws them a curve," says Schmidt. "The support of our faculty and staff is instrumental in our ability to both fund awards and spread the word to students in need."

In addition, staff in the College's Office of Grants Development and Compliance work in partnership with the TCC Foundation to secure emergency fund donations from outside foundations. "There are many funding sources, and the applications for funds from third-party foundations are detailed and rigorous. And with the pandemic, there is more competition than ever," says Kim Moss-Linnear, the District executive director of grants development. "Our team specializes in identifying new opportunities for funding and making sure applications for that funding meet every requirement.

"It's a meticulous process but very rewarding," continues

Moss-Linnear, "because when it comes to the emergency fund, what we do helps ensure there are enough resources to help all students who qualify."

Local businesses that employ TCC graduates are another key source of donations. Despite the economic stresses of the pandemic, some corporate contributions actually have increased based on the outstanding retention rate of recipients, Schmidt notes.

"Each donation has so much value," he adds. "Every dollar goes directly to what it's designated for, and I can really attest that every dollar matters. Whether it's a major donation from a corporation or foundation, or an individual donation of a few dollars, it all adds up and allows us to continue this program."

### **Overcoming Every Kind of Barrier**

Of course, the Student Emergency Assistance Fund is just one of many ways the TCC Foundation and the College as a whole work to eliminate barriers for students. Campus-based food pantries, no-cost transportation via Trinity Metro bus and rail service, health services including free flu shots, academic tutoring and support, CARE teams that provide connections to campus and community resources—these are among the many longstanding efforts to ensure TCC students have every opportunity to succeed.

There are other programs that provide financial assistance as well; the TCC Foundation distributes more than \$1.7 million in merit- and need-based scholarships each year, for example. Also, after the pandemic hit, the College began administering Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund monies as part of COVID-19 federal government acts. Tens of thousands of TCC students have received more than \$120 million in those grants (\$1,500 per recipient per semester) for tuition, fees and other expenses directly related to the pandemic. It's hugely beneficial for impacted students, while also allowing the TCC Foundation to direct its available funds to students whose crises are more ordinary in nature but no less overwhelming.

"I didn't think I'd have the money to fix my car, and there was no one else to drive me to campus," says Peters, who received her emergency fund award earlier this year and is now completing her second semester at the College. "People who have donated their own money to help students like me—that's the ultimate blessing. When I graduate and have a career, I'm definitely going to pay it forward."

***To apply for the Student Emergency Assistance Fund or make a donation, visit: [foundation.tccd.edu](https://foundation.tccd.edu)***





# GROWING STRONGER

TCC'S HORTICULTURE PROGRAM IS  
PLANTING SEEDS THAT WILL PROVIDE  
A HARVEST FOR YEARS TO COME

By Hillary Green

**M**uch like *artemisia ludoviciana* (prairie sage), TCC's Horticulture program remains resilient in spite of the challenges students faced learning through a pandemic. Founded in 1976, the comprehensive program is the only one of its kind in the metroplex and offers students the skills and opportunities on which to build their career.

## Planting Seeds

As TCC pivoted to online learning in Spring 2020, the Horticulture program was able to offer hybrid classes—a mix of virtual and in-person learning. While things may have been hard at first, the Horticulture program managed to blossom throughout the pandemic, even doubling enrollment numbers since stay-at-home orders began.

David Cole, learning lab manager and adjunct horticulture instructor, was just happy to be with people during a time with so much social isolation. "It's not the most glamorous job, but we're just so glad to get out of the house and get our hands dirty in a setting that's fun and educational," said Cole.

Since the students were unable to take part in community projects like they would during a typical semester, they took to projects in their own backyard on TCC Northwest.

The students worked not only in the greenhouses and outdoor gardens, but also in the pollinator garden. Pollinators are critical to our ecosystem, ensuring the healthy harvest of crops and plants that feed the world.

Students also participated in the upkeep on the Prairie Restoration Project, working to identify various flowers and plants, as well as remove invasive species which pose a threat to native Texas plants.

All this work is part of the Horticulture department's "learning by doing" method: students learn how to care for plants because they are the ones in



the greenhouse day after day. They also prepare themselves for careers in landscape irrigation, for example, by laying irrigation pipe.

“Horticulture is managing the outdoors, and our students are doing just that,” said Cole.

### Spreading Leaves

With TCC returning to in-person classes in Fall 2021, the Horticulture program was able to start reconnecting not only with each other, but also the community.

The Horticulture Club, open to any TCC student, held weekly outdoor meetings to work on service projects, like the annual plant sale. TCC held this year’s plant sale in April after having to cancel the last two years due to the pandemic.

For the sale, they grow everything from annual flowers to vegetables and herbs, all perfect for the home gardener.

The club is also learning about plants indigenous to Texas from instructional associate Bill Freiheit. Club members get hands-on experience propagating many rare, native plants that are critical to the local ecosystem and support eco-sustainability.

Cole and his students also are excited about a new collaboration with Grow Southeast ([coactntx.org/grow-se](http://coactntx.org/grow-se)), a joint community development initiative formed by CoAct, the Healthy Tarrant County Collaboration and the Office of Commissioner Roy Charles Brooks, to incubate locally owned urban farms to combat food insecurity.

“Their goal is to not only empower people to start their own farm business and potentially make a living, but also provide fresh, healthy produce to people in those communities,” said Cole.

According to the USDA, many of the neighborhoods in Southeast Fort Worth are classified as a “food desert,” meaning that there is a serious lack of affordable and quality food. Grow Southeast supports urban farmers to meet that demand for fresh, healthy food.

“Urban farms are the foundation for a resilient food system,” said Jesse Herrera, a former TCC employee and founder and executive director of one of Grow Southeast’s

partner organizations, CoAct. “Without farms, it is difficult to develop any of the other supporting markets including farmers markets, food hubs, niche restaurants and local delivery options.”

TCC students are growing plant seedlings to provide to the urban farms, which will then grow them to harvest. Herrera hopes the collaboration not only strengthens the community, but also students’ passion for farming.

“For us, we imagine a future where the narrative is different, and farming is embraced as a relevant and profitable career choice that is celebrated,” said Herrera.

### Blooming Bright

The future is flourishing for TCC’s Horticulture students. After a stellar performance at the 2019 National Collegiate Landscape Competition, TCC returned for the 2022 competition in March; TCC student Paul Preston placed 14th out of more than 500 students. Students competed in events like flower and foliage identification, landscape lighting and exterior landscape design.

“It might seem a little intimidating that we are a two-year school competing against four-year schools, but we actually beat some of the four-year schools,” said Bulpitt. He credits TCC’s hands-on curriculum for preparing students to test their trade and career skills.

TCC student Clay Holsworth hopes to own his own greenhouse company one day, and his education from TCC’s Horticulture program will help make that a reality. Holsworth is working on an Associate of Applied Science in Horticulture and plans to transfer to Texas A&M upon graduation from TCC.

“I would like to see more programs exactly like this one, and more teachers like the ones I have who are so knowledgeable and sincere,” said Holsworth. “It allows for more people with plant knowledge to go out into the world and make a difference.”

**For more information about TCC’s Horticulture program, visit: <https://tccd.edu/horticulture>**









# The Soul Needs

TCC Dance instructors highlight the power of dance and movement

By Reginald Lewis

Members of the dance community typically use Albert Einstein's quote, "Dancers are the athletes of God," to describe the mix of athleticism and spirituality dancers in all genres display. Many dance forms, especially ballet, are physically demanding, requiring dancers to lean on their endurance, strength and speed to perform. Scientists agree that dancing is legitimate exercise and can do wonders for the body, leading to greater agility and flexibility, enhanced cardiovascular health, better balance and coordination, weight loss and stronger bones. It can improve mood, too. Fans of "Grey's Anatomy" will remember Meredith Grey and Cristina Yang routinely "dancing it out" when their days became too stressful.

Whether a person has been performing for years or is new to the art form, Tarrant County College offers an array of dance classes and performance opportunities to students of all ages.

For example, any student interested in joining one of TCC's touring dance companies—Movers Unlimited at TCC Northeast, Mosaic Dance Project at TCC Northwest, Continuum Dance Company at TCC South and Fusion Dance Company at TCC Southeast—can audition for a roster spot. Students interested in a fun, non-competitive environment can join one of the two community integrated dance companies (the Northeast Dance Company and the Northwest Dance Company).

These programs have enjoyed popularity and critical success largely due to the caliber of instruction.





# to move

A full-page photograph of a young woman with long blonde hair, wearing a maroon long-sleeved sweatshirt and black pants, performing a high kick. She is barefoot and her right leg is extended vertically towards the top of the frame. Her left arm is extended downwards, touching a dark stone ledge. In the background, another young woman with long brown hair, also wearing a maroon sweatshirt and light-colored pants, stands looking towards the camera. The background is a light-colored stone wall with vertical lines.

Members of the dance community typically use Albert Einstein's quote, "Dancers are the athletes of God," to describe the mix of athleticism and spirituality dancers in all genres display.



REACH Magazine caught up with TCC's dance instructors who are training the next generation of arts advocates, performers, educators and cultural leaders.

**Kihyoung Choi**

*Professor of Dance,  
TCC Northeast*

Choi started in 2009 as an adjunct professor at TCC Northeast.

Hometown:  
Seoul, South Korea

**Lacreacia**

**Sanders**

*Associate Professor  
of Dance, TCC  
Northwest*

Sanders began as an adjunct in 2001 and became full time in 2005. She taught at TCC Connect as well as TCC Northwest.

Hometown:  
Fort Worth

**Brandy M.**

**Niccolai-Belfi**

*Associate Professor  
of Dance, TCC  
Southeast;  
Department Chair  
of Fine Arts since  
2019*

Niccolai-Belfi started as an adjunct at TCC South in 2007 and moved to TCC Southeast in 2014.

Hometown:  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Kiera Amison**

*Instructor of  
Dance, TCC Trinity  
River*

Amison joined as an adjunct in 2013 and became full-time in 2014.

Hometown:  
Dallas

**Amy Jennings**

*Associate Professor  
of Dance, TCC  
Northeast*

Jennings began at TCC Northeast as an adjunct in 2004.

Hometown:  
Butler, PA

**Hyn Jung (Jenna)**

**Chang**

*Associate Professor  
of Dance at TCC  
Northeast*

Chang began teaching at TCC in 2018.

Hometown:  
Daejeon, South  
Korea



“

**Dancers with humility are incredibly important. Dancers who are not afraid of being vulnerable and who express and embrace humility can embody and convey the spirit of dance and make others feel something through feeling it themselves.**

Kihyoung Choi  
Professor of Dance , TCC Northeast



# Power of Dance and Movement

**Read what TCC's dance faculty has to say about diversity in dance, dealing with bad reviews and why appearing on "Dancing with the Stars" could present a challenge or two.**

## When did your passion for dance begin?

While most of TCC's dance faculty shared stories about focusing on dance at an early age, Professor Choi took a more circuitous route—one that included a bit of deception.

**Choi:** For as long as I can remember, I've always wanted to pursue dance. When I was younger, my path was already decided for me—a career as a concert pianist. Since the age of three, that's what my training was and what my parents wanted. Moving my body, however, had always made me feel so happy and free. Right before the entrance exam to my arts school at age 11, I suffered an arm injury. Although I could play the piano, I used it as an excuse to tell my parents that I couldn't play, but I could dance. I got in (the arts school) and have been dancing ever since. A moment of ignorant bravery was all it took, and here I am.

**Chang:** My passion for dance was instilled in me as a child. I started with K-pop covers from the 2000s. I was also inspired by my father who danced in street styles like popping and waving.

**Jennings:** My earliest memory of dance was a seed planted by my sister. She loved dance, so I loved dance. My mom was also an inspiration. She would talk about her years taking ballet and then show a few dance moves around the kitchen.

**Sanders:** I began dancing when I was six and was studio trained for most of my childhood. I always enjoyed dancing and never felt forced to attend classes. My passion grew more while in college. It was at that point that I learned dance would become more than just a hobby or something fun to do on the side.

**Amison:** When I was 14, I began studying dance at the performing arts high school in Dallas. Being immersed in dance at Booker T. Washington High School for Performing and Visual Arts deepened my love and passion for dance, as it afforded me opportunities and experiences with masters in the discipline of dance.

## What does dance mean to you?

**Jennings:** Simply put, life. It is breath in my body, it is home in my flesh, and it is roots in my bones. I have a piece of Walt Whitman's "Song of the Open Road" taped on my office wall and when I read it, this is dance to me: freedom, love, endurance, compassion, discovery, exploration, poetry and perseverance.

**Sanders:** To me, dance means freedom, imagination and community.

**Amison:** Dance for me is a means of expression that is more clear, more honest and more vulnerable than spoken language or song.

**Choi:** Before, when I was a professional dancer, dancing mainly served to perform, and to receive discipline and hard work. But it made me happy at a personal level, even with its challenges. Over the years, as I've taught, it's become more about humanity.

**Chang:** Dance, to me, is life itself. Without movement, nothing can be done—so to me, all life is dance.

## How would you describe your choreography?

**Sanders:** I've often called it "Lacraecia-ography" as I prefer not to have boundaries within genres. If I want to fuse modern with jazz and ballet with hip-hop, I'll do it.

**Amison:** It is important to me that the audience feels something and connects to the work. I've seen more works than I can possibly tell you about, but the tones that stick with me are those that made me feel something. It's what we call an "aesthetic experience."

**Niccolai-Belfi:** I do not consider myself a choreographer. However, I think my style of choreography is one of two styles: 1) deeply emotional and featuring a storyline or 2) no storyline and showcasing the dancers' physicality through very physical, full-bodied movement.

**Jennings:** My choreography is rich with metaphor and imagery. Whether my concepts are narrative or abstract, I do enjoy threading whimsical moments. I also love the athleticism in my work, movement that is sustainable, details in gestures that help the audience follow is a key for me.

**Chang:** I started choreographing when I was in middle school. My ideas come from God. I collaborate with Him to create all my works.

## Thinking of your students, what are the qualities of a good dancer?

**Sanders:** A "good" dancer is one who makes use of his or her physical capabilities, not to mention the life experiences they bring into their performance and creative projects.

# Power of Dance and Movement

Growth is also essential.

**Jennings:** A dancer who is ready to learn and discover, no matter the level of experience they have, prepares them to exceed their expectations.

**Niccolai-Belfi:** Passion, drive and commitment. I believe these things are greater than talent and ability. A dancer can have impeccable technique, but if their heart is not in it, they will not be successful in the field.

**Amison:** The most important quality is determination and willingness to try. Anyone can dance. It takes time and effort, but anyone who wants to dance, in my opinion, can.

**Choi:** Dancers with humility are incredibly important. Dancers who are not afraid of being vulnerable and who express and embrace humility can embody and convey the spirit of dance and make others feel something through feeling it themselves.

## Any funny stories from the stage or the studio you'd like to share with the readers?

**Choi:** The first thing that comes to mind is this time when my dancers were performing a traditional Korean drum dance for the International Festival here at TCC Northeast. Sometimes in a drum dance, there can be rhythmic shouting. During the performance, my dancers seemed to be particularly loud in their shouting and moved their feet extremely fast. It turns out that they were dancing on a black marley flooring that had been baking in the Texas sun for many hours prior to the performance. I didn't even know until the performance was over that the dancers were in pain! It was terrible, but we all laughed the hardest

we ever laughed afterwards in the studio together.

**Amison:** I choreographed a piece about addiction, and it was one of the most hilarious choreographic processes I've been a part of. In the dance, we discussed all kinds of addiction: food, drugs, plastic surgery, technology, etc. When working difficult material, dancers need to have the space to laugh, joke and be relaxed when not practicing the choreography.

## How do you deal with a bad review?

**Niccolai-Belfi:** If my choreography or pedagogical trials end up not being successful, while it may sting, I look at it as a way to grow and improve.

**Jennings:** At first, there is a bit of indulging in navel gazing and after I swim through this part, I then begin to ask questions of my work. It brings back the curiosity aspect of my work and it helps to shape the review and jump back into the revision part. That's what I enjoy about choreography, like an artist working through revisions or a chef creating a dish and then adjusting ingredients. A bad review becomes motivating in my craft of renewal and keeping a healthy perspective that art is to invoke a response and not all responses will be good. This is part of life.

**Sanders:** Any type of criticism brings room for growth and education. It's also important to remember that a review comes from one person's perspective.

## What are the advantages and disadvantages or mixing different kinds of dancing and working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds?

**Jennings:** I don't know that there is a disadvantage to this process. As a dance artist, we do and live this all the time: working with various dance styles, genres and, of course, cultural backgrounds. To me, this is like play time. What is everyone bringing to the group and what can we do together, enjoy together and create together.

**Niccolai-Belfi:** I do not see any disadvantage with working with a diverse population and with diversity in movement and experiences. People are fascinating, and we all should embrace each other's uniqueness. As educators, we can learn a lot from other people's experiences.

**Amison:** I love being exposed to various cultures and allowing the students to be exposed to that, too. Dance is for everyone and the more we, as a society, are open to various ideas and cultures, the better off we all are.

**Sanders:** Growth as humans. This is one of the major benefits of the arts.

## What's the most common misconception about dancers?

**Jennings:** That dancers only dance around and may not require critical thinking skills when, in fact, dancers are exceptional as thinkers and doers. There is consistent refinement in muscle memory, problem solving, timing and scholarly research in our craft.

**Niccolai-Belfi:** That dancers must be a certain body type or look a certain way. This is not true. Anyone can be a dancer if their heart is set on it.

**Choi:** "Do a lift." "Do a spin." "Oh, so you're a ballerina?" Dancers take a lot of behind-the-scenes preparation and factors, and not all dancers like to, or can, dance anywhere at any time. Some





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**I love being exposed to various cultures and allowing the students to be exposed to that, too. Dance is for everyone and the more we, as a society, are open to various ideas and cultures, the better off we all are.**

Kiera Amison  
Instructor of Dance, TCC Trinity River



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**One of the biggest misconceptions is dancers with natural ability or years of classical training who walk into the studio are the only successful dancers. This leaves out an overwhelming number of people in this field who were considered beginners, even as adults. I've seen students move from lacking the confidence to blooming into a soloist who commands the stage.**

Lacreacia Sanders  
Associate Professor of Dance,  
TCC Northwest





# Power of Dance and Movement

dancers love improvising and sharing their love for dance in this way, but for others it can be something sacred that requires a lot of time, planning and training.

**Sanders:** One of the biggest misconceptions is dancers with natural ability or years of classical training who walk into the studio are the only successful dancers. This leaves out an overwhelming number of people in this field who were considered beginners, even as adults. I've seen students move from lacking the confidence to blooming into a soloist who commands the stage.

## Any advice for high school dancers trying to find the right dance program?

**Amison:** Visit the campus and watch a class, if possible. The best way to know is to be in the space and see if it feels comfortable/compatible for them.

**Niccolai-Belfi:** Don't be afraid to start your training at a community college such as TCC. We will prepare you to move to a university and your credits will transfer, even if they appear as electives. Visit as many schools as you can to find a program that feels right. Go outside of your state and investigate what other colleges and universities offer dance.

**Choi:** Try to find a program that not only can challenge you but can provide a safe environment for you to be yourself. One that can discover your strength, potential and cultivate your dance experience and embrace that potential.

**Jennings:** I think it's important for high school dance students to know their options. They can try out a dance

program, attend a masterclass, workshop or audition, or can attend performances of the dance program. This gives insight into where they may envision themselves.

## If you had a chance to appear on "Dancing with the Stars," which dance style would give you the most trouble?

**Jennings:** Hands down, Tango. And I would gladly take on the challenge, as humbling as it would be.

**Amison:** Anything in heels would be a challenge. I have Morton's neuroma in my right foot so most of the dances would be a challenge, but I would try!

**Sanders:** Anything with a partner... which I know is the primary focus of the show. I love being a soloist, and I love to lead in dance. It would be a challenge to follow and not have the option to improvise if needed.

**Niccolai-Belfi:** I'm not sure if any of the genres would be particularly difficult; however, I think dancing with a partner would be a challenge for me. Having to stay in contact with them while moving quickly would be difficult, I think.

## What else should people know about you and your work?

**Sanders:** In my work onstage and in the classroom, I want humans to connect. I want us to be reminded that we need others in this world to survive.

**Jennings:** I will find a way or avenue for dancers to pursue their passion. Dance is for everyone and whether my students are taking classes for enrichment or pursuing the field, there is always a place

to belong and to fly. Dance is home in the body and wherever it leads, plant seeds and continue dancing in every facet of life. The soul needs to move.

**Choi:** My dancers are the most important thing to me. My students at TCC Northeast fill my soul and are the foundation of who I am. I cannot think of my life without them.

## What are career paths for your students? Any atypical ones?

**Sanders:** What I often find interesting is that we have many students come through our program—and return—who are in the medical field. It's interesting to me that many nurses and therapists also have dance backgrounds or interests in dance. There's something about movement, the body and the emotional connections we share.

**Jennings:** There are careers in dance education, dance and business for studio owners, performance and choreography. Interestingly, the number of dancers finding careers on social media has been on the rise. Dance photographers and videographers are needed, and one that should most definitely be pursued is lighting designer for dance. This area needs more technical artistry specific to dance.

## Each semester, hundreds of students enroll in dance programs at TCC, which offers a variety of certificate and degree options that can cross discipline with dance.

**For more information, visit <https://www.tccd.edu/danceprogram>**

# PAVING THE WAY TO HOPES AND DREAMS

TCC FOUNDATION'S  
NEWEST BOARD  
MEMBER IS A  
CLASS ACT

By Paul Sturiale



**A**deline Rogers, the newest member of the Board of Directors of the Tarrant County College Foundation, has turned a life lesson into a lifelong mission.

Spending summers in northern Wisconsin, Rogers learned from her grandmother the importance of education as a way to help people reach their potential and build their lives. It was a lesson,

she says, that has shaped her life and guided her involvement with Tarrant County College and the Foundation.

“My grandmother admired people who were educated because she felt that she was kind of cheated in that area. She had to drop out of school in the sixth grade because she had to care for five siblings after her mother died. One of the things she would always

**I'm a student again. I've come full circle. I guess it's in my blood to be in education. I am taking art classes and I have started a program to share student art with visitors, faculty and staff on campus.**

Adeline Rogers,  
TCC Foundation Board Member



say to us is ‘Would you want someone else to do that to you?’ That made a big impression on me then. It always has,” Rogers said. “And I also strongly believe in education as a way out of poverty and a way to fulfill your dreams, to make a life for yourself and your family.”

As an ongoing student, educator and supporter of TCC since she took her first class in mediation at TCC Southeast, Rogers has had a first-hand view of how the College serves students and, in turn, how students, alumni and the community can help TCC fulfill its mission.

After several years, she began pursuing a degree in Horticulture at TCC because, she says, “My grandmother was one of those people who had a natural green thumb. We used to tease her that she could grow rocks. So, I decided to go back to school for to study Horticulture to honor her.” After studying at TCC Northwest, Rogers graduated with an Associate of Applied Science in Horticulture in 2007.

While studying in the Horticulture program, she saw how much impact the program had on her fellow students and how many of them used it to shape their lives and futures. Rogers was especially impressed by the passion and interest of many part-time students because “they were people who were dedicated and who were working. But they had a real love for horticulture. They saw the program as a steppingstone to a professional future in horticulture,” she said.

Since 2017, her focus has been on increasing her involvement with the TCC Foundation and developing her interest and skills in art. “I’m a student again,” she says, laughing. “I’ve come full circle. I guess it’s in my blood to be in education.”



**I would like to help get the word out about the College and the Foundation and attract more interest in and support for the students... In the larger picture, it means a better quality of life for all of Tarrant County.**

Adeline Rogers,  
TCC Foundation Board Member







**While studying in the Horticulture program, Rogers saw how much impact the program had on her fellow students and how many of them used it to shape their lives and futures.**

Rogers is taking art classes at TCC South while also shining a spotlight on the work of her fellow students. She works with the Fine Arts department and school administration to select, frame and display charcoals and oil paintings in the President's Conference Room and the administrative offices. Since instituting the program in 2020, she has put the work of eight students on display. The showings usually last a full semester.

True to form, she sees the art program as serving a higher purpose. "It gives me a lot of joy to see their eyes light up. They're honored, of course. But it also is a way for visitors to campus to see the quality of work that some of our art students are producing," Rogers said. "The campus president and dean have a lot of people who come to their offices. I hope that it can be a way to influence them to support students through scholarships or one-time gifts."

Rogers' work with the TCC Foundation began in 2016, when she volunteered to review and evaluate scholarship applications. In November 2021, she accepted an appointment to the Foundation's Board of Directors as a way to more directly impact the College and its students.

Rogers believes her past work as a volunteer benefits her in her role on the board. "I developed a better and broader understanding

of the kinds of financial, family and personal challenges they were facing. And, in some cases, I got a real sense of their dreams and the kinds of lives they wanted for themselves and their families. It was very fulfilling, and personally very valuable because I think an awareness of other people's situations is important. It gives you a broader perspective of life in general, like walking in another's shoes."

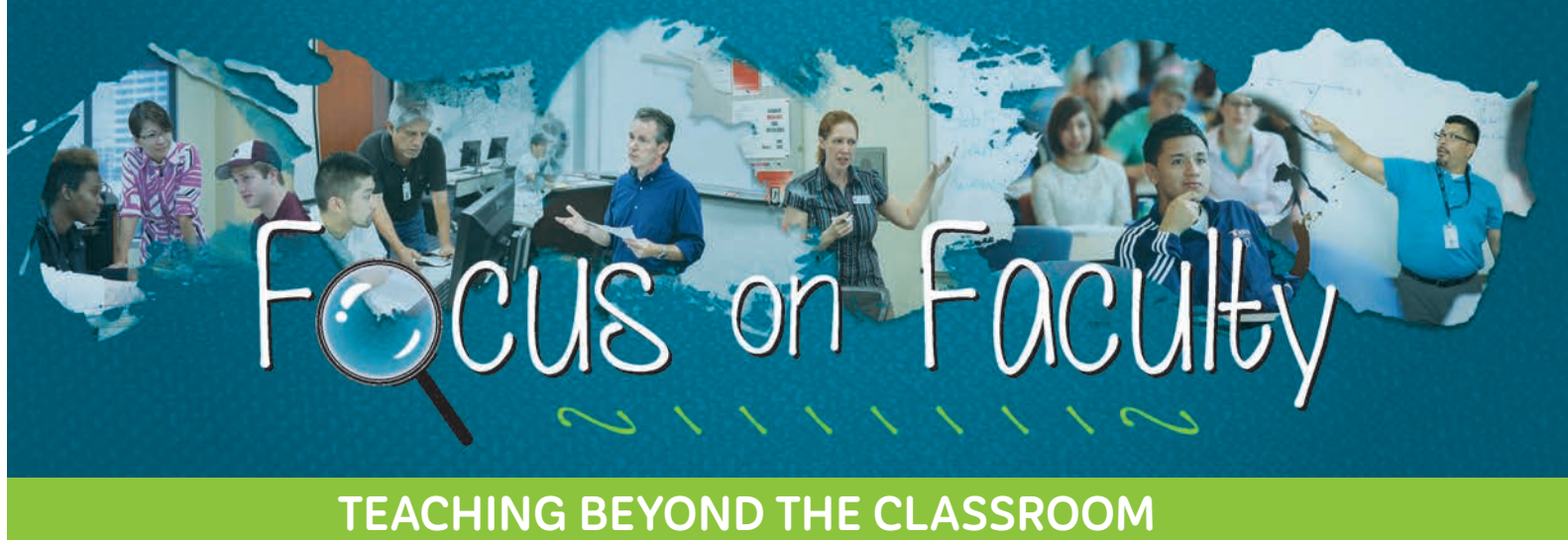
Rogers' interests are reflected in the service areas she will pursue on the Foundation Board. She has volunteered for assignments to the Scholarship, Eliminating Barriers and Governance committees. She also will become a more prominent champion for TCC in the community.

"I would like to help to get the word out about the College and the Foundation as a way to attract more interest in and support for the students," Rogers said. "I want to attract more donors because that will allow us to support more students through additional scholarships and other forms of aid. In the larger picture, it means a better quality of life for all of Tarrant County because it only helps Fort Worth and the County to have more and better qualified workers to contribute to a more prosperous life for all concerned."

Rogers' "larger picture" also includes a special benefit for the College: a greater appreciation of and respect for the school itself. "I would like to see the alumni have more pride in TCC. It's not just a community college. It's an institution that offers a lot more for them. It offers dignity to students' accomplishments, and, ultimately, it offers a way for them to fulfill their hopes and dreams."

***For more information about the TCC Foundation or to make a gift for student scholarships at TCC: <https://www.tccd.edu/tcc-foundation>***





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

TCC Northeast Teacher Education adjunct instructor **Marie Maxwell** wrote a chapter entitled “**The Power of Love**” for *Handbook of Research on Reconceptualizing Preservice Teacher Preparation in Literacy Education*.

**Patricia D. Richards**, associate professor of Photography at TCC Northeast, had images she captured published in four books: *Let’s Play 2021*, *Dante MMXXI/Un Tributo*, *Tales of the Unwritten* and *Urban 2021*.

TCC Northwest Instructor of English **Azinah Usman** had a chapter published in the book, *Arthurian Legend in the Twentieth and Twenty First Centuries*, entitled “**A Kid Wizard in King Arthur’s Court.**” The chapter addresses the connections between the legend of King Arthur and the fictional character, Harry Potter.

**Brian Spence**, program director and assistant professor of Radiologic Technology at TCC Trinity River East, was published in the *Radiologic*

*Technology Journal* by the American Society of Radiologic Technologists. His article is entitled, “**Using Modeling Compounds to Learn Anatomy.**”

TCC Northwest’s chair of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, **Mike Esquivel**, was featured in an article in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. The article focused on global supply chain challenges and the effect it has had on the availability of some over-the-counter medicines.

### GET ON BOARD

TCC Northeast President **Kenya Ayers-Palmore** has been invited to serve on the Board of Directors for the **HEB ISD Foundation**. She also has been appointed to the **United Way of Texas** Board of Directors to serve a three-year term.

Assistant professor of Dental Hygiene at TCC Northeast, **Amy Cooper**, was selected to serve on the Board of Directors for **Dental Health Arlington**—a non-profit, community dental clinic for low-income Tarrant County families.

### WE PRESENT TO YOU

**Tracy Williams**, coordinator of career services at TCC Northwest, presented “Exploring Career Options” and “Building and Writing Your Résumé” at the **Eagle Mountain Saginaw ISD Super Saturday College, Career & Military Planning event**.

**Michael Vendsel**, professor of Philosophy at TCC Southeast, presented the paper “Saturated Phenomena in Anselm’s Proslogion” at the **International Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference (PMR)**, hosted by Villanova University.

TCC Trinity River Professor of Kinesiology **Jason Wooten** presented the positive effects of exercise on mental health as part of the **North Central Texas Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association’s** fall seminar.

**David Bulpitt**, instructor of horticulture and program coordinator at TCC Northwest, made a presentation to the **Tarrant County Food Policy Council (TCFPC)** about TCC’s Horticulture

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.

program and their effort to assist urban farmers by supplying vegetable transplants grown in TCC Northwest's greenhouses.

TCC Southeast's dean for the Division of Mathematics & Science, **Thomas Awtry**, made a presentation at the **Texas Distance Learning Association (TxDLA)** conference in Galveston. The title of the presentation was "GET MOVING: Is Kinesiology Possible in an Online Setting?" The presentation and course development were made possible by a grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The grant was co-authored by Awtry and Christina Bigler from TCC Connect.

### AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

**Angela Shindoll**, mental health program coordinator and instructor at TCC Northeast, received the **Professional and Community Outreach Award** for 2021 from

the State Texas Association of Addiction Professionals. She also is president of the Fort Worth Chapter of Texas Association of Addiction Professionals.

**Rebecca Balcárcel**, associate professor and department co-chair of English at TCC Northeast, won the silver medal from the **International Latino Book Awards** for "Best Debut Book" for her young adult novel, *The Other Half of Happy*.

TCC Northeast Dental Assisting Program Coordinator **Laurie Semple** was awarded the American Dental Assistants (ADAA) **2021 Pride Award for Educators**. This national recognition through ADAA is presented to a member who believes in loyalty to self as well as the profession of dental assisting.

TCC Southeast President **Bill Coppola** was awarded a **Certificate of Excellence** from The University of Texas at Arlington for his outstanding

dedication and partnership with the university in leading and developing students for the future.

**Karl (Des) Robinson**, chair of the Behavioral and Social Science Department and associate professor of psychology at TCC Southeast, received the **Frank Costin Memorial Award for Excellence** at the National Institute for the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP) conference. During the conference, Robinson and Colin Jenney, TCC Southeast associate professor of psychology also presented the talk "Learning to Learn in Online Learning."

**TCC Southeast** was announced as a recipient of the **Eduardo J. Padrón Award for Institutional Transformation** from the Campus Compact Impact Awards. It recognizes the outstanding work of individuals and institutions in pursuit of the public purposes of higher education.

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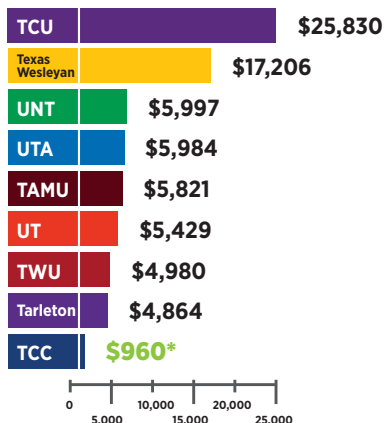
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# SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES