Welcome to the Fall 2015 issue of In the Know @El Centro. The newsletter contains information, photographs, and description of events from last spring to the end of summer, including photos of last May’s commencement ceremony at the Kay Bailey Hutchinson Convention Center. Highlighted in the newsletter are some of the noteworthy accomplishments of our faculty and staff. The newsletter provides one vehicle for sharing information about the “goings on” at the college, and for communicating the activities our colleagues are engaged in and the accomplishments of our faculty and staff. However, the newsletter is only one form of communication, and as much as we endeavor to enhance communication and think that we’ve got it just right, more often than not we are found wanting.

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place” – George Bernard Shaw

So, we will endeavor to continue to use multiple forms and formats (small and large face-to-face meetings, meetings at each campus, email, website, etc.) in an effort to enhance communication and transparency.

I hope that you enjoy reading about our colleagues and seeing them in photos, and look forward to our next publication in the spring semester. We will publish focused editions between the fall and spring newsletters.

The academic year is sure to be full of challenges and opportunities. I wish you a successful semester.

Dr. José Adames
President
El Centro College

Congratulations to Dr. Benja Allen for being honored as the 2015 Excellence in Teaching/Minnie Steven Piper District Award winner! Dr. Allen has provided 43 years of dedicated and highly effective teaching at El Centro College, impacting the lives of thousands of students. When she was announced as the ECC Piper Professor of 2015, it was stated that she "...is extremely effective in the classroom environment and this has been confirmed by many division deans who have rated her classroom performance with the highest classification available." Benja is recognized as a "...truly gifted, Master Teacher who is professional, student-centered and visionary, who is always searching for new ways to present materials in a creative and effective manner."

Other nominees included: Taihe Deng, Ceasar Espinoza, Mwauna Maxwell, and Jessie Yearwood

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...and much more
El Centro College, Texas A&M University Launch New Engineering Academy: Students Will Co-Enroll at Two Institutions

Faced with a critical need for more engineers in Texas, colleges and universities are looking for innovative ways to attract students to that field. Texas A&M University and El Centro College have launched an innovative program to do just that: attract students to the field of engineering, enable them to spend the first two years of study at a community college, co-enroll those students in the Texas A&M Dwight Look College of Engineering, and build a career that supports STEM initiatives and economic development.

The Texas A&M-Chevron Engineering Academy, funded by a $5 million grant from Chevron, will be offered at El Centro as well as the Spring Branch campus of Houston Community College, Texas Southmost College in Brownsville and Alamo Colleges in San Antonio. The academy will open in fall 2016, and participating students can co-enroll in one of 16 majors in engineering through the Texas A&M Dwight Look College of Engineering.

“We hear so much today about establishing career pathways and also about the high demand for qualified graduates in STEM fields,” said Dr. Joe May, chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District. “We are excited to become a partner in the Texas A&M University-Chevron Engineering Academy, which builds a career pathway and also produces the engineers we need for the future.”

May added, “DCCCD believes in partnerships and building the future together with our colleagues in higher education and also with our partners in business and industry. For that reason, I believe that El Centro College is a perfect fit for the Texas A&M University-Chevron Academy. This academy and its future graduates will support economic development and give businesses, including Chevron, qualified engineers for the workforce.”

John Sharp, chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, kicked off the announcement with May, along with Dr. Jose Adames, president of El Centro College; Dr. M. Katherine Banks, vice chancellor and dean of Texas A&M engineering; Dr. Karen Watson, executive vice president and provost for Texas A&M; and Shariq Yosufzai, Chevron’s vice president of ombuds, diversity and inclusion, and association relations.

“Texas has a significant need for more engineers and has an abundance of capable students,” said Sharp. “This new academy program provides a unique pathway toward earning a bachelor’s degree in engineering by completing the first two years of coursework at a two-year college as a Texas A&M engineering student.”

“The Texas A&M-Chevron Engineering Academy at El Centro College supports ECC’s renewed focus on STEM education, and it provides a pathway or a bridge from an associate degree to a bachelor’s degree in a much-needed field,” said Adames. “The agreement is in line with ECC’s STEM grant and other initiatives that encourage more women and under-represented populations in technical fields to consider becoming engineers.”

Banks said the academies have the potential to reach beyond typical pathways for access to a top-ranked engineering program. She also stressed that El Centro students also will be Texas Aggies from the moment they enroll.

“We are excited about this program because our goal is to attract the very best students to Texas A&M engineering, even if circumstances require them to stay close to home for the first two years of college,” she said. “This is not a traditional transfer program. The academy’s students are enrolled in the engineering college at Texas A&M from day one. We are committed to supporting these students throughout their academic program, which will result in a degree from one of the premier engineering colleges in the nation.”

Faculty members from El Centro and Texas A&M will work together to deliver the classes and program that students need in Dallas before they transfer and move to College Station.
New Hires

Administrators
L to R: Kathy Acosta—Executive Director, Community Campus (West Campus), Jennie Pollard—Executive Dean, Corporate and Continuing Education, Greg Morris—Vice President, Academic Affairs, Les Shelby—Director III (Industrial Maintenance, Robotics and Welding), David Barrientos—Assistant to the Vice President (Special Administrative Appointment), Karen Stills Royster—Dean of Student Support Services, Karla Damron—Dean, Instructional Support and Distance Learning (Special Administrative Appointment), Ceaser Espinoza—Director III (Legal Studies) (Special Administrative Appointment), Sara Beth Stall—Associate Instructional Dean (Special Administrative Appointment), Sondra Flemming—Vice President, Community and Economic Development (Title Change)

Faculty

Retirements
L to R: Barry Bates—Professor, Biology, Blossie Chatman—Professor, Nursing, Howard Finney—Executive Dean, Business, Public Service and Information Technology, Carole Olson—Professor, Paralegal, Gary Peschka—Professor, Respiratory Care/Health Careers Curriculum, Beth Sonnier—Professor, Food and Hospitality, William Underwood—Professor, Interior Design, Iris Urday—Lab Supervisor, Nursing
El Centro College offers ‘super’ Retail Management Certificate

El Centro College has partnered with the Western Association of Food Chains (WAFC) to provide a new Retail Management Certificate as part of the organization’s ongoing mission to provide quality education and career opportunities for their employees. The Retail Management Certificate is part of President Obama’s Upskill Initiative that focuses on realizing the full potential of America’s workforce by empowering Americans with the education and training needed to develop new skills and earn higher wages. (https://youtu.be/a510IBk5DOk)

The certificate consists of nine separate classes ranging from “Principles of Management” to “Business Technology.” The academic credits received from these classes may be used toward eventually earning an associate or bachelor’s degree, if a student desires to continue learning beyond the certificate program.

All the retail management certificate classes are available for both full-time and part-time students and will be offered in a 16-week or 8-week format, as well as a 5-week accelerated format during the summer. Courses will be taught both online and in traditional classroom formats.

“We understand the busy schedule of these new students, who are already working their way up in the retail sector,” said Lea Davis, El Centro business administration and management faculty chair. “We want to provide an opportunity for these employees to enhance their skills and have a better chance at getting a promotion in their respective companies and throughout this industry.” Davis added that although the certificate program was initially created at the bequest of the food chain sector, the integrated curriculum is applicable to all aspects of management throughout the retail industry.

The Western Association of Food Chains (http://www.wafc.com/) is the recognized leader in identifying and facilitating food industry-related educational programming that helps food industry associates become leaders within the industry.

The Business Administration and Management programs at El Centro (elcentrocollege.edu/programs/business-administration/) provide training in a wide range of business-related topics including accounting, marketing, economics, human resources, management, and technology, all combined to help students develop skills in teamwork and leadership, motivation, and communications.

El Centro College and DISD Sign Agreement to Share Resources

El Centro College’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Center and Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) have signed an agreement to work together to foster students in STEM engagement. The partnership also aims to assist students in the pursuit of STEM degrees through interactive learning activities, workshops, and outreach events.

“We are excited to have the opportunity to partner with the Dallas ISD in a capacity to reach young minds and provide opportunities to further expose STEM related educational and career pathways,” said Dr. Bryan Reece, El Centro’s STEM Project Director.

Per the agreement, the El Centro STEM Center will provide Dallas ISD students access to interactive learning modules designed to target low scoring Student Expectations (hands-on programs to supplement classroom curriculum at no cost). Dallas ISD students will have the opportunity to participate in workshops for College and Career Readiness in order to increase exposure to STEM Career opportunities.

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Student Highlights

El Centro’s Erin Tierney Kramp Scholarship Winner: Lyeisha Hoof

Education changes lives.

Four Dallas County Community College District students who have survived war, homelessness, poverty, medical issues and feticide know that. They have courage. They have persevered and survived challenges that would have caused others to give up. Now they face the challenge of college, classes and completing a degree so that they can build careers and lives that will take them on to other challenges. With the help of the Erin Tierney Kramp Encouragement Endowed Scholarship from DCCCD, Lyeisha Hoof from El Centro, is ready to take that next step.

The scholarship will help DCCCD students reach for their dreams with financial support which covers full tuition and books for up to six semesters.

The courage and perseverance shown by all four students in the face of adversity are traits exhibited by the person for whom the award is named. Erin Tierney Kramp, who fought breast cancer from 1994 to 1998, created a videotaped legacy on “life lessons” for her young daughter that would convey Erin’s views and advice to Peyton as the young girl grew up, following her mother’s death.

Lyeisha Hoof: Loving a Special Needs Child, Nursing Others

When “Mammo,” Lyeisha Hoof’s grandmother, underwent triple-bypass heart surgery, her granddaughter remembered the amazing nurses who took care of her. Lyeisha decided more than 20 years ago that she wanted to follow in those nurses’ footsteps. The nursing major, who attends El Centro College, will do just that: finish her associate degree, earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees in that field, and open her own clinical practice for women and children. That’s her dream.

Her daily life also includes taking care of Wilson, her special needs son. Lyeisha has done that on her own, ever since Wilson’s father abandoned both of them. But the sun rises and sets on Wilson, according to his mom, and she describes him as “the most amazing little boy.” Wilson has a rare primordial growth disorder called Russell Silver Syndrome, which was diagnosed when he was only two days old. From premature birth to neonatal intensive care, from reactive airway disease to sleep apnea, from a feeding tube to other daily challenges, Wilson and his mother spend more time at hospitals together than they do at home. But that doesn’t daunt Lyeisha, who says, “In spite of every challenge we face, he still remains the strongest person I know. It has been an honor to be his mom, primary caregiver for the past three years and a witness to God’s miraculous power, first-hand.” Last July, Bryan’s House — a medically managed daycare — accepted Wilson into its program.

The Phi Theta Kappa member started her classes at El Centro in 2014, and her scholarship from the Erin Tierney Kramp Foundation will help her earn that first nursing degree and move forward. An active member of her church and a volunteer on campus, Hoof and other students and staff members at the El Centro College West Campus were named a “Community Champion” by the Visiting Nurses Association of Texas for their participation in the Meals on Wheels program. “I am determined to never allow any obstacle that I face to triumph over me. I have hope in knowing that the best is yet to come,” she says.

“We are excited to introduce you to our El Centro College mascot! Our awesome mascot will make appearances at a number of college events. If you are interested in the Chaparral making an appearance at your school event, please contact Shanee’ Moore at ksmoore@dcccd.edu at least two weeks prior to your event.”

— Shaneé Moore

Program Spotlight—WF/CE at BJP

Mr. Robert (Bob) Keough was an employee for the Kodak Company for many years of his adult life. He ended up in trouble with the law and was incarcerated for a short period of time. When he was released from jail, Bob found himself homeless, searching for a way to get his life back on track. He enrolled in the Industrial Arts and Technologies Program at the Bill J. Priest Institute/El Centro College, in April 2009 and was a student until August 2010. During this time, Bob was a full time student and actually stayed late on most days learning all that he could. Upon his completion of the program, Bob immediately found a job with a company based out of Houston, as a pipe welder. Mr. Keough worked for a couple different companies during a 3-4 year period and is now a full time employee for Bechtel Engineering, where he is earning a six figure salary.

— Robert Keough
Banks Receives Hank Cofield Scholarship

William Banks, an El Centro Fashion Marketing student has gained the acclaim of both his fellow peers and faculty members. He is the first recipient of the Hank Cofield Marketing Careers Scholarship. Will has worked as a mens’ department manager at Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th, fashion segment radio co-host, runway stylist, backstage dresser for international luxury designer Zac Posen, fashion blogger, and is Founder and Chief Creative Director of Divo Unlimited Styling Agency. Will studied business management, fashion design, and fashion marketing at El Centro to leverage his skills and experiences in fashion marketing. The Fashion Marketing Program taught him necessary skills to develop and integrate marketing plans, advertising campaigns, a visual merchandising and wardrobe styling portfolios, buying reports, and trend analyses for the fashion industry. Truly honored to be the first recipient of the Hank Cofield Fashion Marketing Careers Scholarship, Will hopes to inspire others through his ambition, creativity, style, and fashion entrepreneurial endeavors. He lives life by the words of Rachel Zoe, “Style is a way to say who you are without having to speak.”

Students Complete CERT Training

Four of our Teen CERT students completed training with the CERT exercise at the Dolphin Road Dodd J. Miller Fire Training Center on Saturday. The teens were: Kam’ron Choice, Bryan Kelly-Weaver, Aden Ojiaku, and Kamaury Thompson.

Four El Centro Students to Receive Achieving the Dream Scholarships

Achieving the Dream, Inc. and OneMain Financial are providing scholarships to four deserving El Centro College students who are near completion; El Centro is one of five community colleges in the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network. Nangoyi Zulu, Heaven Abraha, Carlos Roca, and DeMarcus Craddock are being awarded $3,000 Achieving The Dream Scholarships.

Achieving the Dream is a national nonprofit leading the nation’s most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for student success in higher education history. The Achieving the Dream National Reform Network, including over 200 institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams - working throughout 34 states and the District of Columbia - helps nearly 4 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams.
Commencement Highlights

El Centro’s Commencement was held May 17, in the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center Dallas Arena. The Commencement speaker was Piper Professor Troy Furlough and, also — for the first time — a graduate (Jose Carreon) spoke on behalf of the student body. Carreon graduated with an Associate in Science degree and is attending The University of Texas this fall. This year, 585 students participated in commencement. Jerry Jones (music professor), Avis Hardaman (student singer), Sharon Seaton (organist), and Melissa Cruz (violinist) provided music for the ceremony. Trustee Diana Flores gave congratulatory remarks on behalf of the DCCCD Board of Trustees.

El Centro in the Big Apple

El Centro students and staff had the opportunity to attend the 11th annual Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities (APCA) Leadership on Broadway Conference that was held in New York City, July 15-19. On July 16, El Centro attendees volunteered at a Boys and Girls Club and served on a panel to share their educational journey and experiences with local teens. The Council of The City of New York presented each volunteer with a City Council Citation certificate acknowledging their appreciation for their service in the community. In addition, participants received certificates for successfully completing studies in APCA’s Student Activities Development program. ECC students and staff enjoyed networking with other delegates, touring historic landmarks, and enjoyed the Broadway show called “Something Rotten” and attended the Q&A with cast members from the show. ECC Student and staff that attended the conference include A’Shief Moss, Diana Jasso, Beverly Rasnick, Jason Hui, Marlene Gonzalez (OSL Program Specialist) and Shanee’ Moore (Associate Dean, Student Programs and Resources, and Health Services).
**Staff Highlights**

El Centro College President **Dr. Jose Adamés** attended the Harvard Seminar for New Presidents in Cambridge, MA, July 10-15. The Seminar provided participants with a practical and conceptual orientation to the presidency. The five-day program included intensive, interactive sessions that addressed academic leadership, governance, fundraising, financial management, administrative team building, and strategic planning.

**The Technology Summer Institute “Navigating Future Technologies – Innovate|Integrate|Motivate,”** presented by the LeCroy Center and El Centro on June 26, was a huge success. There were 113 participants at the West Campus. To see photos from the day, visit fast.dcccd.edu/2015technologysummerinstitute/, and scroll to the bottom for “Photos from the Event.” Highlights featuring **Dr. Joe May** can be found at https://tv.dcccd.edu/video.php?vid=2102

The inaugural **ECC Field Day** event held Friday, July 17 at the West Campus was an amazing and delightful event! There were engagement activities and information about Human Resources, Emergency Preparedness, the P-card initiative, and music. But more importantly, we had an opportunity to engage each other as a community and as friends. Thanks to everyone who organized the ECC Field Day event so memorable and successful, and in particular the organizing committee: Beth Sonnier, Priscilla Staley, Jerry Jones, Kyndell Rollins, Florine Humble, Kimberly Wilson, Gina Coffman, Charlie Alexander, Swee-Hua Goh, Sue Kornfield, Olivia Kerr, Ida Keller, Linda Savage, Linda Moore, Kathy Acosta, Tammy Hale, Dewayne Wright, Marilyn Sullivan, Maggie Johnson, Kim King, Helen Pharr, Amy Loftis, and Steve Deshazo. Special thanks to Mary Benson for leading the team. In addition, Sondra Flemming, Les Shelby, Teresa Isbell, and Dr. Adateas volunteered to BBQ. Bryan Reece and David Browning flew the drone. The Van Shuttle drivers: George Laffon, Norm Howden, Jessica Locke, William Alexander, Swee-Hua Goh, Sue Kornfield, Olivia Kerr, Ida Keller, Linda Savage, Linda Moore, Kathy Acosta, Tammy Hale, Dewayne Wright, Marilyn Sullivan, Maggie Johnson, Kim King, Helen Pharr, Amy Loftis, and Steve Deshazo. Special thanks to Mary Benson for leading the team. In addition, Sondra Flemming, Les Shelby, Teresa Isbell, and Dr. Adateas volunteered to BBQ. Bryan Reece and David Browning flew the drone. The Van Shuttle drivers: George Laffon, Norm Howden, Jessica Locke, William Smith, and Ramona Williams. Ryan Scott for creating the link to the video and photos. There are so many others to thank who volunteered their services or just made the day more fun by their participation!

On Friday July 10, **El Centro Police** promoted Officers Bryan Shaw and Danny Mason to the rank of Detective/Corporal, these men will be tasked with investigating all offenses which occur on El Centro property. The investigation of crime, such as theft, is

A team of faculty and administrators from El Centro attended the 2015 National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence, May 23-26, in Austin. **David Barrientos**, grants management and compliance coordinator, conducted a poster presentation on the Health Professions Pathways (H2P) grant titled “Best Practices & Lessons From a Round 1 TAACCCT (Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training) Grant Recipient.” Developmental Studies faculty **Monica Stansberry** conducted the poster presentation, “The Implications of Accepting Personal Baggage in Academic Expression.” Also, **Joselyn Gonzalez**, human development faculty, facilitated the breakout session, “Meaningful Assessment in First-Year Experience Courses Using Signature Assignments.” **Derrick Payne**, speech communications faculty, and **William Smith**, assistant dean in the Communications, Mathematics, and Developmental Studies Division, co-presented the breakout sessions: “Effectively Serving the Male Student Population: Keys to Success” and “Exploring the First-Year Experience: Setting Up Success.” Payne was named a Master Presenter by the NISOD organization. This conference provided an excellent opportunity to highlight the programs and strategies being used at El Centro to increase student success, to a national audience of community college and higher education professionals.

**David Goomas**, El Centro Psychology faculty, was a presenter at this year’s Southwestern Psychological Association Convention held in Wichita, KS. His topic was “IT-assisted Equipment Safety Checks System Compliance Improvement at a Distribution Center.” It is an Occupational Safety and Health Act regulatory requirement for workers operating motorized equipment to perform equipment checks prior to operating it to ensure the equipment is safe. The objective was to develop a framework for a computerized equipment safety checks system configured for 100 percent compliance. In the event the vehicle failed a safety check, the maintenance manager received an immediate email alert. Not only did the intervention result in 100 percent compliance, but the drivers found the system easy to use and it ensured their equipment was safe to operate.

**Dr. Chemene Crawford**, Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Management at El Centro, has been selected to serve as 2015 New Professionals Institute (NPI) Faculty for Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA)/Region III of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). The Institute is held annually on the University of Alabama - Huntsville campus. NPI is the preeminent professional development opportunity for new student affairs professionals in the South. Co-sponsored by NASPA Region III and SACSA, the NPI is an intensive, interactive week of learning, sharing, networking, and professional and personal development. This unique opportunity allows new professionals to draw on their first years of experience to improve their effectiveness and to learn from others. It is a time of professional and personal renewal, and assists new professionals in the development of their careers.