

# VERNON COLLEGE

The Official Newspaper of Vernon College - Serving the Community with 35 years of Excellence in Education

## INSIGHT

[www.vernoncollege.edu](http://www.vernoncollege.edu)

April 2007

Vernon and Wichita Falls, Texas

### From the President

We know from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) research, that students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and engage in collaborative efforts with other students. The research shows that active and collaborative learning is perhaps the most consistent predictor of student success across various studies and measures. In addition to meeting in classes, we see this everyday as students congregate in the Student Center, Library, residence halls, and even in the hallways to discuss and share ideas and information. It struck me that what often goes unnoticed is the active collaboration of faculty and staff in serving students. Perhaps we take it for granted as part of our jobs, but I believe that we are modeling this behavior for students in our daily practices.

Since we know that active collaboration is a key to student success, it only makes sense that active collaboration is also a key to a productive and positive climate in which to work. I was recently reviewing the College's mission statement, and it occurred to me that the threads that hold us all together; faculty, staff and students, is embodied in our core values, and one in particular, building relationships. It is difficult if not impossible to actively collaborate without building positive relationships. Our success in serving students depends on positive relationships; peer to peer, teacher to student, student to student, college to the communities that we serve. Each of these gives us opportunities for active collaboration and building positive relationships. I said that perhaps we take this for granted as part of our jobs, but we should be mindful that even though we all have specific responsibilities, we are integral parts of a larger mosaic of teaching, learning and leading. Our collective success hinges on building positive relationships and collaboration. As you read about your peers and colleagues in this issue of *VCI*, and the many ways in which we are actively involved in professional development and preparing students for the future, we should all take pride in our accomplishments, and in knowing that our core values are not just words on a page, but central to our attitudes and behavior.

*-Dr. Steve Thomas, President*



*Vernon College Board Member Curtis Graf and Dr. Steve Thomas visit with State Representative Rick Hardcastle on the opening day of the 80th legislative session in Austin in January.*

## More Than What At First Glance Meets The Eye...

This semester Vernon College realized an 11.03% increase in Internet course registrations over the spring 2006 semester. By comparison, 435 students enrolled in online courses last year and that figure jumped to 483 for spring 2007. This trend is not expected to reverse itself, instead, it is predicted that Internet courses will continue to be a demand commodity. This percentage increase reflects student's lives and their desire to "fit" college courses into an ever burgeoning schedule that oftentimes postpones studying until the wee hours of the morning. However, societal trends are just a piece of the puzzle and not the whole picture.

The percentage increase for online enrollments is also indicative of the quality of the online courses offered by Vernon College faculty. The faculty pride themselves in offering students the best possible experience in the online arena and strive to create courses that truly engage the student in the learning process. It is more difficult to achieve true student engagement in an online environment. Faculty must use very innovative instructional methodology and avail themselves to the various features offered in an electronic course management system in order to equal the experience received by students in a face to face environment. In fact, it was the faculty's desire to provide online students with the best possible learning environment that recently led to the year long conversion of VC's existing electronic course management system. Vernon College has upgraded its electronic course management system from WebCT version 4.0 to WebCT/Blackboard version 6.0. "Navigation is much easier in the Internet courses with this upgraded version and encourages impromptu conversations with the *Who's Online* chat feature. In addition, instructors will like the online grade book which is downloadable into an Excel spreadsheet," said Jan Brott, Director of Distance Learning

However, the conversion didn't happen overnight or without a lot of blood, sweat equity, and tears. During the spring 2006 semester, James Graham, Academic Computer Specialist, uploaded the new software, configured the new SQL server, and set up shells for each existing course to aid in the migration (a.k.a. conversion) from the old to the new system. Alex Passos, Instructional Technology Designer, Title III, and Jan Brott developed migration tutorials and workshops to acquaint the faculty with the new product's features. Three courageous faculty members (Sandy Gabel, Computer and Information Technology Instructor, Joe Johnston, Division Chair and English Instructor, and Larry Jordan, Government Instructor) beta tested the new course management system during summer 2006. Their efforts enabled distance learning technicians to begin troubleshooting kinks that existed with the new software and hardware. The faculty's feedback was instrumental and revealed that more hardware configurations and software downloads were necessary to implement the new product. Still in the testing period, Dina Neal, Psychology/Sociology Instructor and CAD Instructor, Leroy Estes converted their existing courses and Mary Rivard, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor, and Gene Nessel, Welding Instructor, actually created courses with the new course management system in preparation for the fall 2006 semester. And, once again, faculty feedback was instrumental to system improvements.

Full implementation of the new course management system occurred during the spring 2007 semester. All Vernon College WebCT courses were converted, and, in fact, many of the faculty actually spent time during the Christmas break getting their courses ready for student enrollment. As the College continues to implement the new product there are still challenges that occur and must be worked through by faculty and staff however; overall the conversion appears to have been a success. So, now you have the rest of the pieces of the picture. Internet course enrollment increases don't just happen in a vacuum. Instead, they are the result of a dedicated faculty and staff.

-Dr. Brenda Kays, Dean of Instructional Services

## The SACS Accreditation Process (as explained by SACS)

The accrediting standards used by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools *Commission on Colleges* are contained in the handbook, *Principles of Accreditation*. This document provides consistent guidelines for peer review, representing the collective judgment of the membership on standards appropriate for the assurance of quality in higher education. In March of 2008, Vernon College will submit a *Compliance Certification* document that demonstrates its judgment of the extent of its compliance with each of the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Regulations as presented in the *Principles*. The *Compliance Certification* document is reviewed by an off-site review committee which advises the on-site review committee by making observations about the information the institution provides and by determining the institution's compliance with standards.

The concept of quality enhancement is at the heart of the *Commission's* philosophy of accreditation. Each institution applying for renewal of accreditation is required to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP describes a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) related to enhancing student learning. At the culmination of the QEP, the *Commission on Colleges* sends an on-site committee of professional peers to the campus to assess the educational strengths and weaknesses of the institution. The written report of the committee helps the institution improve its programs, refine its QEP, and also provides the basis on which the *Commission* decides to grant, continue, reaffirm, or withdraw accreditation. Please see [SACS](#) on page 4

## Faculty/Staff Accomplishments

- ◆ Debbie Alexander, Veterans Affairs/Financial Aid Coordinator, was elected to serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP for this next year at the TACVPO.
- ◆ Michelle A. Alexander, Director of Institutional Advancement, was a presenter at the Nonprofit Management Center of Wichita Falls Board Leadership Forum in February 2007.
- ◆ In April Beth Arnold, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor, Cathy Bolton, Gina White, Amy Hamm, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor, and Jennifer Bedford, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor, will attend a workshop sponsored by the THECB entitled *Promoting a Successful Transition from Application to Registered Nurse*.
- ◆ Roger Blackmon, Automotive Technology Instructor, Al Garcia, EMS Coordinator, Mark Holcomb, Division Chair and Electronics Instructor, Gene Nessel, Welding Instructor, Teresa Ramos, Child Development Instructor, Chris Smith, Machining Instructor, Sharon Wallace, Computer Technology Instructor, and Stephanie M. Yoder, Associate of Arts in Teaching Instructor, participated in the North Texas Tech Prep Consortium Junior High Career Safari at the MPEC in Wichita Falls, March 7, 2007.
- ◆ Bob Bolton, Associate Dean, Administrative Services, will be attending the annual meeting of SACUBO in Oklahoma City April 21-24, 2007.
- ◆ In February, Cathy Bolton, Director Associate Degree Nursing and Gina White, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor, attended the Texas Organization of Associate Degree Nursing and the Texas Community College Teacher's Association in Austin. Attended the following presentations: *Closing the Gap Between Academia and Practice = Competency, E-Learning, Test and Test Item Analysis, Curriculum Changes for Safe Patient Handling, and An Alternative Clinical Education Model: Providing Precepted Experiences Throughout the Curriculum*.
- ◆ Bristi Cure, Early College Start Coordinator, and Michelle McCord from Iowa Park High School presented an information session about the classes to be offered at the Skills Training Center during the Fall 2007 Semester to Iowa Park High School Juniors as part of the College Connections partnership.
- ◆ Melissa Elliott, Director of Financial Aid, Jeanne Ballard, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, and Chelsea Boggess-Phillips, Student Loan Coordinator attended the TASFA Conference in Austin, April 3-5, 2007. Financial Aid presentations were held during January and February at Vernon, Crowell, Quanah, Northside, Stamford, City View, Iowa Park, Chillicothe, WFHS, Knox City, Archer City, Hirschi, and Electra High Schools.
- ◆ Melissa Elliott, Director of Financial Aid, was a presenter at the TASFA Conference.
- ◆ Jeff Feix, Surgical Technology Coordinator/Instructor, serves as President of the Texas State Assembly of AST where he chaired a meeting between the state assembly, the Association of periOperative Registered Nurse (AORN), Texas Council of Operating Room Nurses (TCORN), and the Registered Nurse First Assistants (RNFA) to discuss legislation regulating the profession of surgical technology that is to be introduced in the 2007 session.
- ◆ Dr. Dawn Ferrell, Director, Institutional Research and Planning and SACS Liaison, participated in Community Legislative Days in Austin at the State Capitol, April 3-4, 2007.
- ◆ Gene Frommelt, Media Specialist, attended a Tanberg ITV equipment seminar in Dallas on April 3.
- ◆ Gene Gooch, Dean of Administrative Services, participated in Community Legislative Days in Austin at the State Capitol, April 3-4, 2007. He has been appointed to the chair of the Distinguished Service Award Review Committee for Southern Association of College and University Business Officers. He will attend the annual meeting of SACUBO in Oklahoma City April 21-24, 2007. Gene is currently serving as the Business Partner and Exhibitor liaison for the Texas Association of Community College Business Officers (TACCBO) where he attended the final planning meeting in March 20-21, 2007 for the annual meeting of TACCBO in Galveston this summer.
- ◆ Marian Grona, Director, Library Services, and Stephen Stafford, Librarian, will attend the Texas Library Association (TLA) meeting in San Antonio, April 12-13, 2007. Sessions will be presented on distance learning library services, library instruction and SACS accreditation updates.
- ◆ Marian Grona will attend a pre-conference session at the TLA meeting on "Serving Academic Distance Learning Populations," April 9, 2007. Topics to be covered include distance learning populations, the identification of learner needs, and the exploration of tools for designing and providing services.
- ◆ Marian Grona, Kim Long, Library Assistant, Peggy Browning, Help Desk/Library Assistant, Lana Claycamp, Library Assistant, Stephen Stafford, Librarian, Patti Jouett, Library Associate, Suzanne Butler, Library Associate, and Maggie Chavez, Library Assistant, participated in RCLweb online training February 26 – March 2, 2007. They also participated in online training for eLibrary Curriculum Edition, March 19-22, 2007.
- ◆ John Hardin, III, Dean of Student Services and Athletic Director, led a delegation of Vernon College SGA and Student Forum members to Community College Days at the State Capitol, February 21-22, 2007.
- ◆ Betsy Harkey, Director, Student Relations, met with Iowa Park ISD personnel on February 28<sup>th</sup> about incorporating "planning for college" information as part of the College Connections partnership with the school district. She also attended a college legal conference at the University of North Texas, April 2, 2007.

## Faculty/Staff Accomplishments

◆ Joe Hite, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and Registrar, and Lana Carter, Admissions and Records Computer Coordinator, attended the POISE users conference in Houston April 1-4, 2007. Admissions and Financial Aid have also completed the Docubase process for Admissions files and currently enrolled files including all records since 1987. They are currently working on older, inactive files.

◆ Lois Jablonski, General Ledger Accountant, Stacy Rodgers, Revenue Accounting Clerk, and Mindi Flynn, Staff Accountant, attended the POISE Users Group annual conference in Houston April 1-4, 2007.

◆ Joe Johnston, Division Chair and English Instructor, facilitated a vertical alignment session for the Vernon College English Department faculty and local high schools on March 30, 2007. Twenty-one representatives from ISDs in the College's 12 county service area participated. Title III staff assisted in the coordination and support of the meeting.

◆ Linda Kalski, Criminal Justice Instructor, represented Vernon College on the Steering Committee for the North Texas Regional Training Seminar. The annual conference will be held in April at Midwestern State University and provided 20 training hours to licensed professional counselors, adult/juvenile probation officers, social workers, educators, mental health professionals, students and the public.

◆ Dr. Brenda Kays, Dean of Instructional Services, participated in Community Legislative Days in Austin at the State Capitol, April 3-4, 2007.

◆ Donnie Purvis, Director of Information Technology, attended the POISE Users Group annual conference in Houston April 1-4, 2007.

◆ Dr. Steve Thomas, President, participated in Community Legislative Days in Austin at the State Capitol, April 3-4, 2007.

◆ In April, Julie Thompson, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor, Mary Anderson, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor, and Mary Rivard, Associate Degree Nursing Instructor, will be attending a Perinatal Workshop in Dallas.

◆ Paula Whitman, Mathematics Instructor, held a Math Vertical Alignment Meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup> with the Iowa Park ISD administrators and teachers to discuss the alignment of curriculum between the high school and college algebra as part of the College Connections partnership.

◆ Lois Willis, Director of Human Resources, attended the Texas Association of Community College Human Resources Professionals (TACCHRP) Mid-Winter Conference in Austin February 19-21, 2007. Topics included a legislative update from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and future changes and updates from ERS. She will attend TASB annual meeting in Austin April 22-24, 2007.

## Student Representatives

Twenty Vernon College student representatives from the Vernon campus and Century City Center in Wichita Falls participated in Community College Day at the Capitol in Austin on February 22. Leaders of the Texas Junior College Student Government Association (TJCSGA) were joined by state officials speaking from the steps of the Capitol. The event marks the second time that community college students have organized statewide to visit lawmakers. Vernon College's twenty student representatives toured the capitol grounds Thursday morning, observed the House and Senate in session and visited with Representatives David Farabee and Rick Hardcastle and Senator Craig Estes. After their visits they enjoyed lunch on the lawn with Dr. Thomas and Dean Hardin courtesy of the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC).

## SACS Continued from page 2

continue, reaffirm, or withdraw accreditation.

During a typical three-day visit, committee members examine data and conduct interviews in order to evaluate the soundness of the QEP and ascertain whether the institution is in compliance with the Principles. The committee offers written advice to the institution, develops a consensus on its findings, and completes a draft report. Finally, the committee presents an oral summary in an exit report to the chief executive officer and invited institutional officials on the last day of the visit. The departure of the committee from campus does not mark the end of the accreditation process. The visiting committee report and the response of the institution to the findings of the committee are reviewed by the *Committee on Compliance and Reports*, a standing committee of the *Commission*. The *Committee on Compliance and Reports* recommends action on accreditation to the *Executive Council of the Commission*. The *Executive Council* in turn recommends action to the *Commission on Colleges*, which makes the final decision. These decisions are announced to the College Delegate Assembly during its annual business session.

For more information on Vernon College's reaffirmation process, contact Dr. Dawn Ferrell, Accreditation Liaison, at 696.8752 ext 3269 or [dferrell@vernoncollege.edu](mailto:dferrell@vernoncollege.edu).

-Dr. Dawn Ferrell  
SACS Accreditation Liaison



*Vernon College students at the State Capitol in Austin with Dean John Hardin III, Carole Hawkins, and Andrea Powell.*

## Student Forum

◆ The Student Forum, representing the student bodies of Vernon College-Wichita Falls, has been established to facilitate communication within the college community, to coordinate student activities in exploring ways and means to serve the interests and welfare of the student body, and to act as a forum in aiding the institution in the development of future goals and policies. The Student Forum is comprised of students who are interested in assisting VC students and the community by making changes to help brighten lives. While serving as an elected officer in the Student Forum, students receive a \$500 scholarship. During the Fall semester they had a Halloween Costume Contest and a coat drive. After the coats were collected, they were cleaned by Comet Cleaners and donated to the Faith Mission. Also during the fall, they held a bake sale that raised \$200 to help two VC students during the Christmas holidays. As the 2006-2007 school year rapidly comes to a close, Student Forum members are finishing out the Spring semester with a bang! During the Spring semester they had the chance to visit the capitol for Community College Day at the Capitol in Austin. While at the capitol they had the opportunity to meet Representatives David Farabee and Rick Hardcastle. Another bake sale was recently held which collected \$300 with the proceeds donated to Interfaith Ministries for the purchase of fans for the elderly and needy for use during the hot summer months. On Thursday, March 29th they worked with the Oklahoma Blood Institute and sponsored a blood drive. They will finish up the semester by hosting an "end of the semester" pizza party for the students. The Student Forum offers its members the opportunity to be a positive role model to other students and make an impact on the life of others. For more information about the Student Forum contact Jackie Polk at 940.696.8752 ext. 2302 or [jpolk@vernoncollege.edu](mailto:jpolk@vernoncollege.edu) or Clara Garza at 940.696.8752 ext. 3209 or [cgarza@vernoncollege.edu](mailto:cgarza@vernoncollege.edu).

## Vernon College Relay for Life

The Wilbarger County Relay for Life will be held Friday, June 1, 2007, at Lion Stadium at Vernon High School. Relay for Life was started in 1985 by American Cancer Society volunteer, Dr. Gordon Platt, a Tacoma, Washington surgeon. Dr. Platt raised \$27,000 for the American Cancer Society when he ran and walked at a local track for 24 hours traveling 81 miles. Relay for Life has become the national signature fundraising event for the American Cancer Society. This year, Vernon College has several employees volunteering on the organizational committee for Relay. They are Stacy Rodgers, Revenue Accounting Clerk, Dona Crow, Secretary, Recruiting and Counseling, Rhonda Knox, Secretary, Cashier, and Accounting Clerk, Mary King, Secretary, Title III, and Gina White. In addition to the committee members, Vernon College also has a team participating in Relay captained by Mindi Flynn. Team members include Stacy Rodgers, Aletha Newman, Secretary, Financial Aid, Jeanne Ballard, Lois Jablonski, Tina Baker, Coordinator, Business and Industry Services, Gene Gooch, Caryn Borchardt, Secretary, to the President, Dawn Ferrell, Sarah Davenport, Assistant Registrar, Lana Carter, Kevin Lallmann, Head Baseball Coach, Margaret Tubbs, Secretary, Admissions and Records, Joe Hite, and Kim Bateman, Director, Bookstore Services. There are several fundraisers in the works including a Cosmetology Style Show to showcase the styles and makeup of our Vernon College students in Vernon and at Century City. The Style Show will be held in the Colley Student Center on April 12 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.. Tickets are \$10.00 and include a brisket dinner. We are also planning a dessert bar for April 26. There is a "Workout with the Chaps" baseball camp planned for boys ages 5 and up. The date has not yet been determined. Please help support the American Cancer Society through your donations to any of these team members. During the night of relay, there is a

luminaria ceremony which honors friends and family members who have battled cancer and won and remembers those who have lost the battle with cancer. Individual sacks lit within are displayed around the perimeter of the track. Each of these sacks is purchased by individual donations and represents their loved ones. Please contact any of the team members to purchase your luminaria sacks. Additionally if you know of any survivors who would like to participate in Relay for Life, contact Dona Crow at extension 2278.

## 2006 - 2007 SGA "007 Licensed to Lead"

April 12-15, 2007 is the Texas Junior College Student Government Association (TJCSGA) State Convention in Austin, Texas. Three Vernon College students, Zach Detwiler, Lance Ward, and Mackenzie Willis, will join a multitude of statewide Community Colleges to conduct general business and discuss relative issues on behalf of community college students across Texas. Vernon College has chosen to compete in the annual Scrapbook and Essay competitions again this year.



*Vernon College SGA Representatives:  
Back Row (Standing): Lance Ward—Secretary, and Zach Detwiler—Region 1 Vice-President  
Middle Row (sitting): Leah Moody, Raeanne Leffler—2nd Vice-President, and Jesi Lee  
Front Row (Standing): Samantha Miller, Josh Long—Parliamentarian, Mackenzie Willis—President, and Travis Rose*

## Vernon College Sports

◆ The Vernon College baseball team began their conference games in March and will continue through the first part of May. Lee Darracott, a current Vernon College Chaparral, was featured in the March edition of *Total Texas Baseball*. Former Vernon College Chaparral Heath Taylor was named Big 12 Pitcher of the Week for the University of Oklahoma. Former Vernon College baseball players Joey Calender, drafted by the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and James Simmons, drafted by the San Francisco Giants and Jose Vaquedano, drafted by the Boston Red Sox just finished spring training. Joey and James will be playing in the minor league but watch for Jose Vaquedano, he has a chance to play in the major's this year.

◆ With four rodeos left this semester the Vernon College Rodeo team is sitting in the top five. The women's team is currently sitting in 2nd in the Southwest Region standings and the men's team is sitting 4<sup>th</sup>.



*2006 - 2007 Vernon College Baseball team*

◆ The Lady Chaps Softball team with a record of 29-8, were ranked #10 in the first National Poll. The Lady Chaps will complete their conference games at the end of April.

◆ The Lady Chaps volleyball team has participated in Spring Semester Tournaments at Texas Tech University and Southwestern Oklahoma State University. There are nine current freshmen who will return to play volleyball for Vernon College in the fall.



*2006 - 2007 Vernon College Softball team*

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## Vernon College Insight



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