

COM News

November 2009 Employee Newsletter

COM signs articulation agreement with Texas Chiropractic College

Area residents interested in a career as a chiropractor can now begin their academic studies close to home at COM.

The presidents of Texas Chiropractic College (TCC) in Pasadena and College of the Mainland (COM) in Texas City signed an articulation agreement at the October Board of Trustees meeting. The agreement will allow students pursuing a doctor of chiropractic degree (DC) to complete as many as 90 college credits in science and core curricula at COM, then transfer to TCC to complete its DC degree plan.



Dr. Richard G. Brassard, president of TCC and Dr. Michael Elam, COM president sign an articulation agreement.

Congratulations to Erika Sollosi, our newest American citizen



Erika, COM Librarian, emigrated from her native Hungary to the United States in 2006 with her husband, a native American, when he took a job with NASA. "Being an American citizen means endless opportunities for me," says Erika. "There is no other country that welcomes immigrants like the United States does. The American Dream is still possible, if you work hard, you can be successful, even if you were not born here. You just have to dream big!"

Erika was one of 1,400 new Americans representing 112 different countries at the Houston citizenship ceremony.

Photo: Erika with her mother-in-law, father-in-law, husband Derek and daughter Veronika after becoming an American citizen.

Hispanic heritage scholarship committee says thanks

Hispanic Heritage month ended with a bang as the Hispanic Heritage Scholarship Committee raised money for the scholarship and a generous donation by Marilyn Kish-Molina. Mr. Jimmy Cabrera left us with a dynamic impression of who we can become...passionate, purposeful and powerful.

If you wish to contribute to the scholarship fund, contact the Foundation Office, ext. 508.

COM-Unity scholarships awarded

COM-Unity has awarded 10 \$500 scholarships to COM students for 2009-2010. At its September meeting, the union also approved a new annual \$500 contribution to the scholarship fund that helps COM students study abroad. Since 1994, COM-Unity has donated more than \$91,000 in scholarships, aid to student organizations, and charitable contributions.

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Shoo flu, don't bother me

Walgreens was on campus in late October administering flu shots to 89 students, employees and community members. Thanks to the Wellness Center for arranging the flu shots.



Chair Aware

Sharon Heydorn, COM student, reported on guest speaker Elizabeth Gilbert who presented Chair Aware at COM. The playwright who in 2003 was the victim of a devastating car accident that left her with a spinal chord injury, gave a presentation at COM Oct. 14. Gilbert's presentation was about what it is like to be wheelchair bound in a "stand-up" world. Gilbert relayed her experience of being in the hospital, going through rehabilitation and having undying determination to recover despite the doctors telling her otherwise. Now, thanks to her fortitude, she is able to live outside of the hospital. She helped the audience understand that they need to be considerate of those who have disabilities. She also said not to underestimate what a disabled person can do and not to ignore or shun those who are different. Overall, Gilbert gave a witty and informative presentation about living in a diverse world and being considerate to those who also live there.



Open Auditions for Rodgers and Hart musical

Got the acting bug?

The COM Community Theatre is holding open auditions for the Rodgers and Hart musical, "My Funny Valentine," Sunday, Nov. 1 at 7 p.m. and Monday, Nov. 2 at 7 p.m. Director Mark Adams is looking for four men and four women in their 20s, 30s and 40s. For more details on characters and the play, visit www.com.edu/theatre to download the audition flyer or call ext. 345.

PACT Open House scheduled for Nov. 2

The Partners in Alternative Certification for Teachers (PACT) will hold a ribbon cutting and open house Nov. 2 from 4 to 6 p.m. at its new location in the Appomattox Square Office Park across the esplanade from College of the Mainland.

The public is invited to the open house that includes a ribbon cutting at 4:15 p.m. followed by refreshments and a tour of the center.

There will be an information meeting at 6 p.m. for anyone holding a bachelor's degree that wishes to become a primary or secondary school teacher.

For more information, call ext. 610 or visit www.pact4teachers.com.

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Veterans Day Program at COM to include local history



Veterans Day 2008 guest speaker Anna Edwards, Ohkay Owingeh Tribe shared information on Native Americans in Service to Country.

As part of our annual salute to veterans and active duty military during College Hour Nov. 10, the College will also have a display with photographs of the Naval Blimp Base and Camp Wallace that were located in Hitchcock during the 1940s. Other exhibits will recognize the American Legion on its 90th anniversary and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Mike Williams, senior ride captain with the Southeast Texas Patriot Guard Riders, is the guest speaker. The Patriot Guard is a motorcycle group that supports families who have had a soldier die in combat.

The public and all area veterans are invited to the one-hour event that includes information for veterans and their families and refreshments. Come to the Library at 12:30 p.m. Nov. 10 and show your support for our veterans.

New play at COM reveals a chilling ghost story

Kipps (Jim Hackett of Humanities Department) and Jerome (Alan Hall of Houston) attempt to pay their respects at a funeral, but death haunts the proceedings in more ways than one in “The Woman in Black,” a chilling ghost story adapted by Stephen Mallatratt from the book by Susan Hill, now playing at College of the Mainland Community Theatre through Nov. 22. For tickets and information contact the box office at x345 or online at www.com.edu/theatre.



Math Professor Richardson's son graduates LE Academy



Math professor Leslie Richardson was on hand at the COM Law Enforcement Academy graduation where his son, Ryan, became a Texas Peace Officer. Ryan's class had a 100 percent pass rate on the state exam. Leslie tells us that his son will continue his studies at UHCL where he is a business major.

Spring class schedule available online Nov. 2

The COM spring credit schedule will be online at www.com.edu/schedule beginning Nov. 2. The College will not be mailing out spring schedules as it has in the past. COM will print a few schedules to keep on campus, but the decision not to print and mail almost 100,000 schedules each semester is a cost-saving measure and an effort to “go green” by reducing paper usage.

While the printed schedule was only as current as the day it was sent to print, the online schedule is always current and accessible 24/7. Spring registration begins Dec. 1.

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Birthdays

Geneva Murphy	Administrative Assistant, PELAWS	11/01
David Divine	Chief Information Officer, ITS.....	11/01
James Finley	Faculty, Social and Behavioral Science	11/02
Roberto Arenas	Adviser, Student Support Services	11/03
Ernest Navy	Faculty, Social and Behavioral Science	11/03
Julie Colarich	Administrative Assistant, PELAWS	11/04
Alice Whistler	Admin. Assistant, League City Center.....	11/05
Chris Rushing	Records Specialist, Admissions	11/05
Kimberly Coons	Administrative Assistant, Campus Police	11/07
Bernie Smiley	Faculty, Humanities	11/07
Guindolyn Sharpe	Program Coord., Instructional Admin.	11/08
Bruce Glover	Faculty, Business and Computer Ed.	11/10
Electra Long	Job Placement Specialist, Student Fin. Srv...	11/10
Nancy Chacon	COM Press Operator.....	11/16
Chris Boyd	Media Assistant, Media Services	11/16
Oscar Hernandez	Groundsworker	11/17
Tami Allison	Faculty, Academic Success.....	11/17
Carolyn Veiga	Administrative Assistant, Humanities	11/19
Arlinda Washington	Faculty, Nursing.....	11/20
Peter Early	AVP for Facilities Services	11/20
Savannah Davis	Faculty, Cosmetology.....	11/20
Melissa Judson	Administrative Assistant, Student Life	11/20
Roy Nickerson	Maintenance Technician	11/21
Kay Frieze	Faculty, Public Service Careers	11/21
Olga Smith	Administrative Assistant, Bookstore	11/22
Phillip Cotharn	Professional Trainer II, CE.....	11/22
Brad Traylor	Coordinator-Lab, IT Lab Managers.....	11/22
Tillie Henson	Library Circulation Manager	11/23
Susan Wooten	Administrative Assistant, Purchasing	11/23
Michelle Gerami	Admin. Assistant, President's Office	11/24
Elida Matthews	Program Coordinator I, Adult Education....	11/25
Sparky Koerner	Faculty, Performing/Visual Arts	11/26
Matthew Clausen	Coordinator of Computer Support, ITS.....	11/27
Delores Fernandez	Admin. Assistant, Human Resources	11/28
Charles Jackson	Program Coord., Public Service Careers.....	11/29
Alice Watford	Faculty, Social and Behavioral Science	11/29
Ana Cordero	Custodian	11/30
Gregory Johnson	Faculty, Math/Science.....	11/30

Other ways to Go Green at COM

Recycle your office paper, junk mail, newspaper and magazines at one of three recycle bins on campus. The money the College collects from the recycle company goes into student scholarships, so you are helping the environment and our students. We need to fill up those bins frequently or the recycle company will remove them. Keep a box in your office for waste paper and drop it off at one of the bins once a week.

Another way to save the College money and perhaps a few more trees is to avoid unnecessary printing of e-mails or other long documents that are easily archived online or on your computer.

What other ways can we cut back on paper use? Send us your suggestion.

Earth's Influence

On exhibit now to Nov. 20 COM Art Gallery

ARTISTS

Michael Roque Collins
Beau Comeaux
Rob Erdle
Dixie Friend Gay
Emily Sloan
Kia Niell

ARTISTS TALKS

Michael Roque Collins
Nov. 2 at 2 p.m.
Beau Comeaux
Nov. 12 at 11:30 a.m.

For more information, contact the Art Gallery at ext. 354 or 348.

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Set the Record Straight

Will travel that is written into, and 100 percent funded by a grant, be approved? If no, why not?

Yes, the travel should be approved. Travel written into the grant is approved as long as it is essential to meeting the deliverables of the grant.

The Board settled a lawsuit last month (Herndon v. COM) that I understand involved an incident where a student threatened another student with a “hanging noose.” However, nothing about it was ever reported in the Daily News or COM’s Employee or Student Newsletters. If there are incidents of bias, discrimination or even “hate crimes” on campus, shouldn’t they be openly addressed and dealt with publicly so that “teaching and learning” can take place for everyone, not just those directly involved in the incident? Why is everyone being kept in the dark? In the words of John Buchanan’s famous quote: “History gives us a kind of chart, and we dare not surrender even a small rush light in the darkness. The hasty reformer who does not remember the past will find himself condemned to repeat it.”

The incident happened many years ago. I do not know what was publicized at that time. But I can say that it does not do the students and the community any good to air our dirty laundry in public. It is better for faculty and staff to focus on teaching principles on civility and respect in the present to secure a better future.

From the words of Hillary Clinton, “The challenges of change are always hard. It is important that we begin to unpack those challenges that confront this nation and realize that we each have a role that requires us to change and become more responsible for shaping our own future.”



With everyone’s budget being cut, especially travel, why does the board continue to travel. If they need training, why isn’t a trainer brought here to make it more cost effective?

Travel for the Board has been impacted just as other travel budgets have been cut. The types of professional development that occur at the National Trustee Association are invaluable. The trustees also have committee assignments that they report on and it would be difficult for them to participate if they do not attend the conferences.

Some staff members teach during the day and I assume are receiving an additional salary as adjunct. Are they teaching during their 40 hours or do they need to make up those hours? Isn’t this double dipping and against COM policy?

There are people teaching as a part of their workload or overload. If an employee is teaching during the day, then it has been approved and is a part of their workload. They are not paid for that time. If employees are teaching before work, after work or during their lunch, then they are eligible to receive adjunct pay. Double dipping is not permitted.

Why are some employees in professional positions, who don’t have the degrees, getting paid as having a bachelor’s or master’s degree?

To my knowledge, I am not aware of anyone in that situation. I will investigate this further.

Is there going to be some type of oversight to manage the employee hours, especially those employees who work off campus? Are the employees who are out in the community giving a report on their activities or a schedule of where they are?

Yes, everyone has supervisors and I expect supervisors to supervise. These employees are required to develop a contact plan that outlines expected contacts and proposed benefits.

If employees don’t accept the retirement incentive will their contracts not be renewed next year?

Employees are not being forced to accept the retirement incentive. If employees do not wish to accept the incentive but continue working, then that is permissible and will not impact their contract. Their work performance impacts their contract.

Why is it taking so long for the bathroom renovations? Are there other bathrooms on the list for renovations? If so, where?

Peter Early, Associate VP for Facilities Services, responded: The project was scheduled to reduce the inconvenience to the campus to a minimum. But, as with all renovation projects on 40-year-old buildings, we found additional repairs

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If you have a question you would like President Elam to answer, please submit your question to your council president.

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Set the Record Straight continued

necessary that caused time delays. We are back on schedule and anticipate a Dec. 1 completion date. We plan to renovate the public restrooms in all buildings. The next project will start possibly by June 1, 2010.

When you walk into the bookstore all the employees are sitting around and nobody appears to be working. If there is not enough work to do why are there so many employees in the bookstore?

We create a work schedule for the fulltime employees. We also use part-time on call employees to perform customer service. This service is helping students find the proper books for their classes and operating the cash registers. Some days we have few customers and other days we have groups come in at the end of their class. We need enough clerks to provide good customer service.

It is a well-known fact that a faculty member sells cosmetics from her desk. Is that OK? And if it is can we all run a second business from our office? If this is not OK, how will it be addressed?

If it has been going on for some time and the supervisor has not addressed it, it must not be a problem in the department. This must not impact the employee's job to get their work done in a timely manner. Finally, it is, however, unacceptable and not permitted to utilize the college's computers and other resources for one's own gain, including college time. Make sure you are doing it on your own time.

Future Newsletters

Marketing will not be publishing the COM Employee Newsletter in December. Since it is a short month, the December and January newsletter will be combined for distribution in January.

- What activities are you involved with outside of COM? Other than wearing a caped body suit, driving a Batmobile or fighting crime in Gotham City, tell us about any hobbies you have or what you do to unwind on weekends. We just might use it in our After Hours section. We will watch for the Bat signal.
- Please send suggestions for future newsletter stories to marketing@com.edu and put "Newsletter Suggestions" in the subject line.

Become a Facebook Fan

If you would like to submit information to the COM Facebook page, please fill out a Social Media Request Form and we will post the information.

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