AtD Core Group

Faculty members discussed various strategies for learning students’ names during a Convocation Week workshop led by Pam Millsap and Stacey Henderson. Among the recall techniques discussed were:

• Student Information Cards – index cards each student fills out with contact information and that instructors keep to take roll and make notes about the student to help with recall.
• Name Recognition – asking students to identify themselves by name each time they ask a question. Instructors, in turn, respond to the question using the student’s name.
• A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words – a photo roster of students will help you remember names. Use a digital camera to take photos of each student (with their permission) the first day of class.
• Seating Charts – allow students to find a spot where they plan to sit at least the first two weeks and then develop a seating chart so you can connect names with faces.

Many other strategies were discussed but the most fun was the paper toss. Students write their name and one distinguishing characteristic about themselves—I am wearing a Metallica t-shirt—on a piece of paper and wad it up into a ball. In unison, students toss them around the room until you tell them “Stop!” Students then pick up a paper ball, open it and read the name and go looking for the person. Each student will meet two other students—the person they are seeking and the person seeking them. Plus, it’s a nice ice breaker and a fun way for a class to connect.

The faculty in attendance at this particular workshop got carried away when they zeroed in on the photographer for the aforementioned paper toss. (NOTE: No paper was harmed in this exercise and all pieces were recycled.)

Next up for AtD? Coaches visit Oct. 14 and 15. If you want to learn more about Achieving the Dream and what COM is doing to help more students succeed, visit www.com.edu/atsd.

COM Gallery Director in Galveston Studio Tour

COM gallery curator Janet Hassinger is a participating artist in Artist Homestead Galveston Island First Annual Artist Studio Tours Saturday, September 12 from 1 to 5 p.m. Janet’s Watercolors Investigating a Unique Perception of Coral Reef can be viewed at her studio at 3510 Avenue $½.

Guitar Hero

John Kiefer who has taught guitar at COM since 2003 has found a niche in music publishing—making Mozart electric. His recent book, Mozart for electric guitar, was recently published. It is not his first time he has plugged in one of the old masters to his electric guitar. His first book, J.S. Bach for electric guitar, made a guitar hero out of John Sebastian Bach who passed away before electric anything.

“I’ve always been interested in helping to make the electric guitar a legitimate instrument,” says John.

“And I have always admired the work of the masters so this was the next logical step. If I did my job well, the perfect music of Mozart can only help further the cause.”

John got his first guitar at eight but didn’t get serious about it until he was 14. He gravitated toward heavy metal and then alternative, having played in several bands. He has been teaching guitar since he was 19.

For several years around Halloween he and his COM electric guitar ensemble have put on a Monster Musik Concert (This year it is Oct. 29).

In addition to music books—he has published four—he was commissioned to compose a work for electric guitar and orchestra that was premiered by the Baytown Symphony (Google: “hexenbrau” and “You Tube” to check it out) in 2001.

John Kiefer holds a BM and an MM in music composition from the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. He is also a graduate of the Guitar Institute of Technology in Los Angeles California.

“Rock on, John!”
Artistry of Hair Bridal Design Contest Winners

(left-right): First Place-Michael Talbott, Second Place-Megan Cross, Third Place-Kimyra Lagway and Honorable Mention-John Jobe

Your PDA and Wachovia are proud to present a series on improving YOUR fiscal life.

See How to Save $1 Million Sept. 15 12:30-1:30 p.m.  L131
How you can accrue $1 million in savings in your lifetime. This seminar discusses key savings strategies, easy ways to start saving now, how to save toward a financial goal and why interest compounding is the “most powerful force in the universe.”

Creative Financing Sept. 22 12:30-1:30 p.m.  L131
Credit can help you build a strong financial foundation if used wisely. This seminar discusses credit reports, the lending process and various loan options.

Budgeting and Saving Sept. 29 12:30-1:30 p.m.  L131
Whether you’re just starting to budget or are well versed, this seminar helps identify ways to budget creatively, save time with bills and set attainable goals.

First-Time Home Buyers Guide Oct. 6 12:30-1:30 p.m.  L131
Wells Fargo Home Mortgage discusses the benefits of home ownership, the seven factors most lenders consider when evaluating mortgage applications, mortgage options and what to look for in a lender.

Identity Theft Oct. 13 12:30-1:30 p.m.  L131
Learn how to protect your good name/credit and what to do if you become a victim of identity theft.

COM presents check to United Way

COM presented the Mainland Communities United Way with a check for $12,500 at the recent United Way kick-off luncheon. The check represented the first payment in a College-wide drive. The COM Mainland United Way drive continues through September 30.

Presenting the check to MUW campaign chair Walter Treybig of Sterling Chemicals, Inc. was COM President Michael Elam along with trustees and staff.

We are so close!

We have reached 100 percent of our monetary goal of $14,000 and 46 percent participation. We only need 18 more people to reach 50 percent participation. If you haven’t sent your pledge cards, please do!

Future Newsletters

- 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 unusual 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 employee newsletters to marketing@com.edu and put “Newsletter Suggestions” in the subject line.
Participants comments:

“It was so well organized and conducted! All the presenters did a great job! Hope they will make all employees go through this training. The interaction with other employees was great!”

“I learned sooo much about the inductive and deductive reasoning process. I truly learned why I have so much trouble with some of my supervisors.”

“I plan to use the information gained to use not only with my peers and students in how I treat them but also I plan to teach my student how to treat others that they interact with as a community of respect.”

“I enjoyed the workshop/program. I plan to take this information back to my department and share what I’ve learned. Thank you for this opportunity!”

“I really enjoyed this session. It was not what I expected.”
Why should employees/students go to or e-mail Dr. Elam with problems within their departments? Shouldn’t they be allowed to go through the proper chain of command within their department before contacting the President on simple complaints?

I encourage problems and issues to be worked out within the department at the lowest possible level. I want employees to know they have access to me but I want supervisors and employees to feel empowered to work out differences without my direct involvement.

I’ve heard a rumor that I would like Dr. Elam to address: Employees who are retiring will have to be given “Board approval” to work at COM (after the one-month wait period) as part-time/on-call. Is this true? If yes, what about the retirees who are already working part-time/on-call?

Past incentive practice was to allow for part-time, on-call return to work for any retiree. The main restriction was an incentive retiree could not return to work at COM in a benefits-eligible position. Board approval is not necessary but I take HR personnel matters to the Board for their review and to keep them informed.

Not only is COM suffering from the state of this economy, the community, its students, and employees are too. Several employees have reached the top of the pay scale in their current positions.

Question:
1. How do you keep these employees motivated?
2. How do you continue to reward them so that you can keep your most loyal employees encouraged and happy?
3. What steps can that individual take to move to the next level in order to continue receiving increases?

I am planning to develop and implement a Leadership Development Institute and create a college succession plan that will create opportunities for employees who wish advance in their career or become the next Dean, Associate Vice President, Vice President or even President. If they want to advance within the institution then the Leadership Development Institute would assist them in identifying the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve that goal.

The recent retirement incentive approved by the Board has created various opportunities for mobility and advancement within the institution. These initiatives should be a few motivating factors for college employees who are in that situation.

How does the new Work Hours Procedure apply to classified and professional staff who work less than 40 hours per week, example, those that work a 70 or 60 percent work week?

Every employee will have standard work hours on file established and approved by the supervisor of that department. Even employees that are part time will have a standard work schedule on file and will be expected to work when scheduled. Part time employees may not be subject to lunch breaks or other breaks however they will be held to the same standard regarding work etiquette.

I would like to know if COM allows professional personnel to work from home instead of reporting to the campus to do their job. My supervisor has told me that the President’s Cabinet has discussed this and that nobody should be working from home. However, it seems that one area allows several of their professional staff to work from their home (even during high traffic of Fall registration). This sends a mixed message and causes animosity between coworkers and departments that contributes to the low morale on campus.

Home is never the standard work site. No employee should be working from home. I agree that if this is occurring it does create a perception of unfairness. However, I know that there has not been clarity about this policy in the past. So moving forward the understanding should be clear that working from home is never the standard.

If an individual is ever allowed to work from home that decision would be a RARE exception and will be made with my full knowledge and approval.

Will President Elam be creating a new facilities master plan for the bond or using the old one? If he plans to use a new (or revised) plan, when will the rest of the campus get to see it?

Yes, the Facilities Master Plan will be made available online. We have already begun revising that plan. I plan to make revisions available online to the campus and if anyone would like to see the plan in its current state can make an appointment with me to see it individually. There will be plenty of opportunity to weigh in on the plan before it is final. I believe the college and community will be more than pleased with the recommended changes we are proposing.

Some revisions include expansion of the Fine Arts facility and an addition to the Performing Arts building to be constructed with an area for outdoor activities, a conference center as well as a corporate training center. In addition, an area has been suggested for the construction for student housing, landscaping improvements, the addition of an academic support center and the expansion of the Science and Math facility and much more.

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

Look who’s having a birthday in September!

Janis Cutaia  Coordinator, Lab, Instr. Tech. Lab Managers …………09/01
Detra LeVige  Financial Aid Specialist……………………………………09/01
James Tabor  Faculty, Humanities …………………………………………09/01
Linda Creech  Laboratory Assistant, Instr. Tech. Lab Managers………09/02
Janet Hassinger  Gallery Director, Performing/Visual Arts ………………09/03
Manzurul Khan  Faculty, Business and Computer Education …………09/03
Tammy Stafford  Admin. Assistant, Physical Education …………………09/03
Byonghee Yom  Faculty, Social and Behavioral Science ……………………09/04
Astrid Lowery  Faculty, Humanities ………………………………………09/05
Nick Canton  Maintenance Technician/Electrician ……………………09/05
Pamela Bethscheider  Tech Prep Coordinator, Instr. Admin. …………09/06
Cynthia Lewis  Program Coordinator, Instr. Admin. ……………………09/09
Jennifer Kelly  Faculty, Nursing…………………………………………09/10
Patricia Brown  Faculty, Science/Math Department ……………………..09/11
David Rac  AVP for Financial Services ……………………………………09/12
Eva Neinas  Program Coordinator for Senior Adult Program …………09/12
Mary Dehart  Exec. Administrative Assistant, VP for Instruction ………09/14
Stephen Cohen  Custodian ………………………………………………09/15
Sandra Guzman  Asst. Director of Student Financial Service …………09/15
Kay Magee  Admin. Assistant, Child Development/Education …………09/16
Catherine Moran  Faculty, Academic Success ……………………………09/16
Karen Earl  Administrative Assistant, President’s Office …………………09/16
Christopher Carpenter  Web Application Developer, NSF Grant Depart……09/18
Renate True  Faculty, Science/Math Department ……………………………09/19
Katherine Blundell  Administrative Assistant, Academic Success ………09/19
Freda O’Connor  Faculty, Business and Computer Education …………09/20
Kathryn Park  Director of Library …………………………………………09/21
Andrea Fillip  Accounting Specialist, Financial Services …………………09/21
Carmen Sauceda  Custodian …………………………………………………09/22
Elizabeth Soter  Tutor/Mentor, Academic Success ………………………09/22
Manuel Urbina  Faculty, Social and Behavioral Science …………………09/23
Lonica Bush  Executive Director of Diversity and Equity …………………09/23
Tyshika McDavid  Faculty, Humanities ……………………………………09/23
Amy Locklear  Dean of Gen. Ed. Programs, Instr. Admin. ………………09/23
Christopher Allen  Faculty, Science/Math Department ……………………09/23
Sharon Gordy  Exec. Admin. Assistant, VP for Student Services ………09/24
Troy Terrell  Groundworker ………………………………………………09/24
Kenneth Lee  Manager of Building Operations ……………………………09/27
William Spillar  Vice President for Student Services ……………………09/29
Deborah Biscoe-Ingram  Faculty, Nursing …………………………………09/29
Crystal Collins  Faculty, Physical Education ………………………………09/30

Set the Record Straight, continued

What is the college doing to obtain stimulus funds that are earmarked for higher education?

Several departments are working on acquiring grants directly related to the stimulus dollars. The Board just approved establishing a partnership with Hanover Research Council to assist in writing and administering grants in the absence of a grant writer/department.

Others and myself are traveling to Washington, D.C. in late October to position the college to receive stimulus funds. Dr. Spillar and I attended a workshop in Houston relating to information regarding bonds, directly related to stimulus funds.

We have identified several shovel-ready projects that will qualify for stimulus funds. We continue to do what we can to position ourselves and COM to benefit from the stimulus dollars before time runs out.

No Tricks but it will be a Treat.

Send us a favorite childhood Halloween photo of YOU—not your kids or grandkids or other munchkins—and we may publish it in the October employee newsletter.

If you can’t send us a jpeg, send us the photo interoffice mail or drop it off and we will scan it and send it back to you.

Send it to gcastro@com.edu by September 25.

COM Gallery Director Janet Hassinger checks out the current exhibit in the COM Art Gallery.

Topologically Speaking

Sept. 1 - Oct. 5, 2009
Chad Erpelding
Mark Schatz

Opening reception
Artist talk by Mark Schatz
Sept. 15 at 1:30 p.m.

Closing reception
Artist talk by Chad Erpelding
Oct. 5 at 2 p.m.

www.com.edu/gallery
Hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., one hour prior to each theatre performance and other hours by request
409-938-1211, ext. 354/348 or 888-258-8859, ext. 354/348
Where were you on 9/11?

Rob de los Reyes, Associate Artistic Director, COM Community Theatre
I was living in Manhattan at the time and my office was about five blocks east of the Trade Center. I always turned on the news while dressing for work, and that day, I was dressed with my keys in hand ready to leave for work when I saw the report of the first plane. My office shared a power grid with World Trade 7, so when it went down, our office power was lost. And, of course, when the towers came down, that whole section of town was covered with the dust (my office was under that smoke cloud that you could see on satellite images for days afterward).

I left my apartment though I don’t remember where I was going. What I do remember is that the buses were running for free, and the whole city was as quiet as I’d ever heard it. People were talking to each other on the streets or wherever they were like they were small town neighbors at the local diner. I don’t mean to be hokey about it, but there really was an odd sensation in knowing that every person in New York was thinking about the exact same thing.

A close friend whose wife was in the tower for a special conference when the first plane hit, was told to stay, but happily my friend went and got her out anyway.

Lana Pigao, Director of Marketing
My husband and I had left New York City at 6:30 a.m. from LaGuardia Airport bound for Houston that morning. Nothing seemed unusual during the flight but halfway through it the flight attendants seemed to disappear. When we landed one of the attendants gravely announced that the FAA had grounded all flights in the U.S. so there would be no connecting flights until further notice. It seemed really strange, especially since she gave no explanation; we had no idea what had happened. When we got into the terminal all of the TV monitors had the smoking tower on. At that time only one of the towers had been attacked and the news was that a commuter plane had accidentally flown into it. As we drove home it was announced on the radio that the attack was terrorism. When we got home David called his office and his director choked up with relief because he was convinced we were on one of those planes. When I called my office my assistant told me that her dad was evacuated out of the Pentagon. He was one wall away from that attack. We eventually learned that a family friend who was a firefighter and one of my brother’s childhood friends had died in the towers.

Naomi Grimaldo, Administrative Assistant
I was getting ready for a 09:30 class here at COM. I recall my Aunt Janie waking me up as she was preparing for work. As soon as I arrived at COM classes were cancelled. I returned home and my eyes were glued to the news. Two months later I joined the US Army because of what I saw on the TV that day.

Steve Remollino, Professor of English
I am from New York, and I have family there, some of whom work in Manhattan. Luckily, none of them were working at the World Trade Center. What was scary is that I had been at the World Trade Center in March of that year to have dinner at the restaurant at the top of one of the towers. All I could think about was, “I could have been there the day that this happened.” It gave me a very unsettled feeling knowing that I had been there only a few months before. I have been back to NYC several times since 9/11, and the city looks so strange without the WTC. It almost looks as if the city has gone back in time.

Verna Richardson, Writing Center
When the first plane struck, I was driving down Broadway on my way to work at UTMB. I heard it on the radio. I vaguely thought what a tragic accident it was, and wondered how many people were hurt. I arrived at work, and was in the elevator, when someone said an airplane had just hit one of the Twin Towers. I replied, “That happened about 20 minutes ago.” They said, “That was the first one. Another airplane has just hit the second Tower!” I parroted in shock, “Another one?” By then, the elevator door opened, and I went into the IT department where I worked. I heard a few noises from the Conference Room and went in there. Everyone was glued to the television, watching replays of the plane strikes, listening to the media speculation. After about an hour, someone suggested we pray together. (That had never happened in a departmental gathering during the 25 years I had been at UTMB.) No work was done that day. Everyone walked around in a state of shock, periodically returning to the TV and speculating. … I will never forget.

Cissy Bodmer, Cashier
I worked at San Jacinto South and was on I-45 North when I heard the news on the radio. The first plane had already hit and then a few minutes later when the second plane hit the man on the radio was of course quite upset and he was yelling...we’ve been hit again, dear Lord we’ve been hit again. Ladies and Gentlemen I don’t know where you are right now but I think we should stop where we are right now and say a prayer for the United States, we are being attacked!

Right at that moment the cars on the highway pulled over to the sides of the road, I prayed and as I pulled out other cars were slowly pulling out.

San Jac had a huge population of Middle Eastern students. I was responsible for making sure they had all of their paper work in order so I spoke to many of them on several occasions. About two days after the attacks one of the students came up to me and in very broken English and VERY sincere he said, “I am sorry for what happened to your country.” I thanked him.

Julianne S. Duncan, Assistant Professor
I was on my way home from a 24-hour shift as a paramedic. My mom called me to tell me what was happening. I got home and turned the TV on before the first tower fell still clutching the phone to my ear as I watched that horrible site. My first words to Mom were, “Do you realize how many firefighters just died?”

Steve Sewell, Faculty
I was getting ready to come to work. When I jumped in the shower all was well. When I got out the first tower was already hit. I watched live as the second tower was struck. I was driving to the campus when I heard on the radio that the Pentagon had been hit. A day I will never forget.
SAFETY TIPS:

- Look before you walk and make sure your path is clear.
- Immediately clean up spills, debris, clutter on the floor.
- Wear shoes with soft slip-resistant rubber soles that will provide better traction while on the job.
- Don’t ignore wet floor signs and make the effort to walk around wet surface areas.
- Remove all extension cords from walkways or pathways to eliminate trip hazards.
- You must never stand on chairs, desks, tables, or other objects, to expand your reach.
- In wet weather conditions, take small, slow steps when tracking through water. Don’t run or hurry to avoid getting wet from the rain.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- High Heels
- Smooth Soles
- Worn-Out Shoes

The insurance industry has reported that 50% of all slip and falls are caused by wearing the wrong type of shoes!!!