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Important Dates

October 20

- Chamber of Commerce Banquet

October 25

- ACT Testing

November 21

- Law Enforcement Graduation

December 11-16

- Final Exams

December 18

- BRTC Graduation

"Anyone who wants to go to college can go to college.....But these days, it is a lot harder."

Financial Aid Sees Huge Growth in Loan Volume

Given the healthy increase in BRTC enrollment for Fall 2003, from a headcount of 1670 to 1839 credit students, a corresponding increase in the amount of financial aid to be awarded is not surprising. What may be surprising, however, according to Financial Aid Director Carolyn Collins, is the size of the increase in the number of students seeking to fund part or all of their education with student loans.



Mary Anderson Financial Aid Officer I

According to figures for a five-year period, from 1998-99 through 2002-03, the academic year just completed, both the number of students borrowing money to fund their education and the total amount of money loaned students at BRTC have increased by a whopping 300 percent. In the 1998-99 academic year, 126 students borrowed approximately \$300,000. In the 2002-03 academic year, 511 students borrowed about \$1.37 million. During that time frame, BRTC's fall enrollment increased by some 40 percent, from 1184 in the Fall of 1998 to 1670 in the Fall of 2002.

The trend is not out of step with what is happening in other colleges around the country in the face of shrinking state budgets and a less

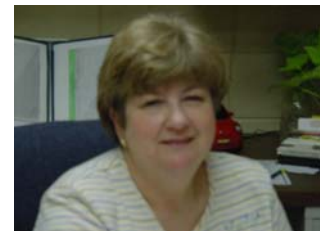
than robust economy.

Collins sees this increase in student borrowing both positively and negatively. To the extent increased student loans may reflect a growing awareness of the importance of and a commitment to higher education, the increase may bode well for the future. However, she added, the down side of this picture may be that students are making financial decisions that will prove burdensome in the coming years. She does believe that a major factor in the heightened loan volume is the current economic downturn. This opinion is grounded in part by her observance that a large part of students seeking loans tend to be those adults (24 and over) in either low-paying jobs, the group the U. S. government defines as "the working poor," or those who have suffered job layoffs and plant closures.

Loan Officers Brandi Chester and Mary Anderson agree. Students they assist in the loan process, they point out, often make a quick decision to borrow money. The loan may be their solution when they find themselves suddenly out of a job, or are overwhelmed with bills they need to pay, or with the demands of single parenthood. In such situations,



Brandi Chester Financial Aid Officer II



Carolyn Collins Financial Aid Director

Chester pointed out, students sometimes are frustrated with the slowness of the process that requires them to gather certain documentation required by the federal government.

In addition to an increase in loans, the number and the amount of Pell grants have also moved upward, according to unofficial figures from the office of Financial Aid. Pell Grants are federally funded, and comprise the major source of financial aid for BRTC students and for students nationwide.

Student enrollment increased by 40% over a five-year period while student loan volume soared more than 300%

In the first disbursement of Pell funding in the Fall of 2002, Collins reported a total of 724 students, or about 43 percent of the total enrollment, received approximately \$1.16 million. As of the first disbursement for Fall 2003, a total of 827 students, approximately 45% of the students,

Financial Aid cont'd. from page 1

have been awarded about \$1.26 million. Additional Pell disbursements will continue throughout the semester, but the bulk of the awards comes in the first disbursement, Collins explained.

Pell Grants may range from a maximum of \$2,025 per semester for a student enrolled full time to \$200 per semester for a student enrolled part-time. The maximum Pell award for an entire year is \$4,050, and these figures hold for any student enrolled in any college nationwide, explained Anderson. The amount awarded through Pell is based on a rather complex formula taking into account income, the number in the family, the number of college students in the family, and certain verifiable extenuating circumstances. Younger students often do not realize that unless

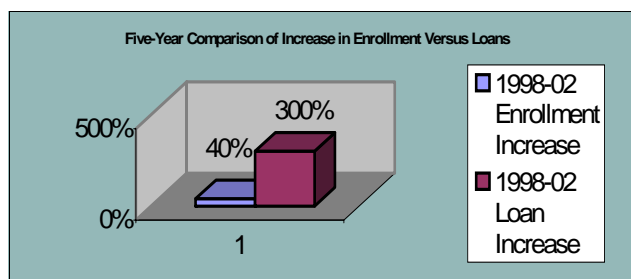
they are married, or fully support a child, or are a veteran or a ward of the court, their parents' income is a factor until the student reaches age 24, Chester pointed out. Many students assume that if they are 22 or 23, and are living more or less independently, it is their own income that determines Pell eligibility, and they are shocked and disappointed when they learn otherwise, she said.

Scholarships form a third smaller piece of the Financial Aid pie, according to figures from the Financial Aid office. The number of Academic Distinction scholarships awarded in 2003 has increased from 29 to 36, with the dollar amounts from this source increasing from \$29,000 in the Fall of 2002 to \$40,000 in the Fall of 2003. These scholarships are based on students achieving a score of 24 or

better on the ACT, or being in the top 10% of their graduating classes. The number of students receiving Arkansas Challenge Scholarships actually declined this year, from 60 to 53 scholarships with a total dollar decline from \$75,000 to \$56,495. This decline, Collins speculated, may be a result of the uncertainty over the availability of the state-funded award which had been in limbo during the 2002-03 academic year. The Challenge Scholarships were reinstated for the 2003-04 academic year. Other scholarship awards (excluding Single Parent Scholarships) are down also,

from 39 privately funded scholarships totaling \$27,374 in the Fall of 2002 to 35 scholarships totaling \$15,441 in the Fall of 2003. This decline, Collins believes, is also tied to economic conditions.

Conventional wisdom often claims that, given the various sources of funding assistance, "Anyone who wants to go to college *can* go to college." Collins said that while she would like to believe this is usually "still true," she has to add this caveat: "But these days, it is a lot harder."



Victoria Barkley Robinett

Robinett Certified in Law Enforcement

With the recent certification of Victoria Barkley Robinett as a Law Enforcement Officer, the entire staff of BRTC's Law Enforcement Training department are now law enforcement officers, announced Tim Daley, department director. Robinett, who

lends her expertise in the areas of physical education, health, and other areas, completed the certification recently through a twelve-week Basic Police Training Course (BPTC) at the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy in Camden.

She received the top award in physical training in the class of 68 students.

A resident of Imboden, Robinett began teaching as an adjunct physical education instructor in 1999, and assumed full-time teaching responsibili-

ties in 2000. In addition to the courses in physical education, she also assists in teaching restricted law enforcement topics, including defensive tactics, OC Spray, officer safety tactics, and other classes. Previously, Robinett was certified by the Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training as a general instructor, but with the completion of the BPTC, she now holds Professional Instructor certification.

"She has been instrumental in assisting us to ensure that female students, as

well as male students, succeed in this program," said Daley. "While training is designed to be gender-neutral, we recognize there are physical and psychological differences, and Mrs. Robinett has been a great asset. Physical training is a very integral component of law enforcement training, and she is the only person on staff truly qualified in all aspects. We are very proud of her accomplishment, both for herself personally, and for us here in the Law Enforcement Training program at BRTC."

PTK Sponsors Blood Drive



Shana Akers
Student Services Secretary

The BRTC chapter of Phi Theta Kappa sponsored a blood drive October 6 on the Pocahontas campus. A total of 32 units of blood were collected.

Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) is an international honor society for two-year colleges. Members participate in many community service activities including blood drives, a food drive, and the "adopt a highway" program

where PTK members recently cleaned up a section of Highway 304 E. Another blood drive scheduled for January 12, 2004.

This year's PTK officers are Darryl Foster, President; Darla Hopper, Vice-President; Tashina Pontzius, Public Relations; and Rod Kreuger, Secretary Treasurer.

Anyone interested in learning more about Phi Theta Kappa may

contact Dr. Linda Moss in the Science Department.



Dr. Linda Moss
Science Instructor

Single Parent Scholarship Fund Has Record Number of Recipients

For the Fall semester of 2003, twelve scholarships were given through the Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship Fund, a record number since its inception in 1992. A total of 108 scholarships have been given since the first three \$500 scholarships were awarded for the 1992-1993 school year.

MSSPS Chair Kay Ellis, Business instructor, announced the following scholarship recipients for this semester: Vivian Penn of Pocahontas - \$300; Ginger Dildine, Julie Huff, Lisa Hayes, Lisa Jones, Angela Kerley, Julie Perkins, Debra Riddle, and Shannon Wegener, all of Pocahontas - \$400 each; Loretta Avery and Stacey Peoples of Maynard - \$400 each; and Stephanie Cloinger of Imboden - \$400.

The BRTC chapter of the state



Kay Ellis, MSSPS Chair

Single Parent Scholarship program is administered through the BRTC Foundation. Donations to the fund may be made through the Foundation, and will be matched at the rate of 150% by the state organization. Individuals in the community may send donations to: BRTC Foundation, P.O. Box 468, Pocahontas. BRTC faculty and staff are encouraged to support the program through the college's payroll deduction plan. Scholarship recipients must be single-parent residents of Randolph County, have custody of minor children, and meet income guidelines. This scholarship is designed as a supplement to other forms of financial aid. For more information, contact the office of Financial Aid or Kay Ellis in the Business Department.

Design Class from BRTC Creates Library Window Display

BRTC's Design Class taught by Sandy Davis-Baltz has created artwork and designed the windows for the Randolph County Library as a community service project. The class was asked to decorate the windows for the month of October and to use the theme of autumn.

The students designed the words FALL and exhibited their drawings of leaves using the media of marker, graphite pencil, and colored pencil. Many students contributed by supplying leaves, rice, milo, cornstalks, soybeans, pumpkins, straw, mums, and scarecrow.

The design class promotes artistic learning in the areas of shape, color, texture, and placement of objects, either representational or abstract.

The Design and other art classes offered at the college can be used as requirements for art majors and elec-

tives for other degrees. Some individuals enjoy taking the studio art classes as means of enrichment as well.



Students are Mantha Baltz, Patsy Baltz, Aaron Boone, Rachel Clifton, Tommy Crum, Nora Cummins, Sue DeClerk, Onera DeClerk, Joey McNeal, Denny Moore, Cameron Priest, Catherine Ratliff, Casey Rickey and Diania Thielemier.

Race for the Cure

With breast cancer hitting so close to home for one BRTC employee, participating in the annual "Race for the Cure" was a way of showing support for loved ones battling the disease.

Leslie Rutledge, data entry specialist at BRTC in Pocahontas, has witnessed the impact of breast cancer first hand. Her maternal grandmother, her grandmother's two sisters, and the mother of a good friend all have experienced the disease.

Leslie, along with her mother, Bobbie Fowler, and her grandmother, Maxine Reese, decided to participate in the race held in Little Rock three years ago after learning of the experience from her friend who had been active in the race with her own mother for the two previous years.

"I felt the need to become involved

because my grandmother has had breast cancer and so have her two sisters, explains Leslie about her reason for getting involved. "I know that puts my mother at a very high risk and myself at an even higher risk," she added.

Rutledge, Fowler, and Reese were among over 36,000 people on more than 500 teams participating in Little Rock's 10th annual Race for the Cure held October 4. The race raised over \$1 million in registration fees alone, about \$800,000 of which will stay in Arkansas.

Nancy Brinker established The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation in honor of her sister who fell victim to the disease in 1980. Since its inception in 1982, The Komen Foundation has raised over \$600 million and become the largest

private funding of research dedicated solely to breast cancer in the U.S.

Getting involved through events such as a Race for the Cure helps to promote awareness and provide education and is a way of showing support for those who have experienced the disease. "It seems like everyone knows someone or is related to someone who has been directly affected by this disease," Leslie stated.



Bobbie Fowler, Leslie Rutledge and Maxine Reese

French Honored



Vickie French, administrative assistant to the president,

recently accepted the "Spirit of 110" award at a ceremony at the state capitol. This award, presented by Governor Mike Huckabee, was given in recognition of French's work as executive secretary to the BRTC Foundation, a volunteer organization.

"We appreciate the efforts of the BRTC Foundation in their fundraising support," said BRTC President Gaines. "We are currently moving into a phase which will see this group to greatly increase its involvement and effort in development activities."

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Mission Statement

Black River Technical College is an institution of higher learning committed to a partnership with the individual and the global community to provide lifelong learning experiences, seeking always to empower those it serves to achieve their academic, vocational, and personal development goals.



Richard Gaines

I always try to come away from any conference with at least a few valuable key ideas or “bites” of information that are useful because they inspire me, or inform me, or even challenge me in some way. The keynote address at last week’s annual meeting of the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges in Hot Springs provided this sort of information not only to me, but also to the large contingency from BRTC attending this meeting. In her keynote speech, Kathy Brittany White spoke of the movement of jobs out of the United States and into what used to be

From the President's Desk

termed “third world countries.” The founder of Horizon Institute of Technology and an Arkansas native who has “come home,” White noted that communities who have suffered plant closures long to land new manufacturing employers to take the place of the one or more which have left. But she insisted this is not likely to happen. She also noted that not only manufacturing jobs, but increasingly many “white collar” technology jobs are leaving the United States at an incredible rate, locating, for example, in places like India. White suggested to the audience of educators that to continue the United States’ position as an economic power, we must begin thinking more regionally and state-wide rather than in the isolation of our own communities. She pointed out also that the work can be taken to the people, via technology, as is the case in India, meaning that people can have job opportunities in regions

that may be distant from us. This concept is very much in the forefront of our minds here at BRTC as we work to expand and emphasize our distance education program and to make educational opportunities accessible to more people. As White said in her presentation, “Education and Employment equal Economic Expansion.” We here at BRTC are committed to doing our part to bring economic expansion to our region and to our state.

AATYC Conference

Dr. Jan Ziegler presented a session at the Fall Conference of the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges October 12-14 in Hot Springs. The session was, “Teaching the Holocaust: Why Should We? How Should We?” Pattie Blaxton moderated Dr. Ziegler’s session.

Four individuals representing BRTC were honored at the conference: Outstanding Faculty Member Tina Harris, Outstanding Alumna Paula Gardner of Hoxie, and Academic All-Star Manuel Mooney of Walnut Ridge. BRTC President Richard Gaines accepted the award on behalf of Outstanding Staff Member Steve Williams, currently on active duty with the U. S. Army Reserve.

Others attending were Jack McCord, Angie Caldwell, Dr. Roger Johnson, Vicki Kuykendall, Dennis Cooper, Jacinda Welch, Sharon Watson, Priscilla Stillwell, Karen Liebhaber, Kelly Grooms, Debbye Jarrett and Vickie French.



Presenters at AATYC Conference
Patti Blaxton, Dir. of Cont. Ed.
and Dr. Jan Ziegler, Dir. of Institutional Advancement