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The River's Edge

Inside this issue:

RN Program (cont'd from page 1) 2

Building Program to Result in New Campus Look 2

Graduate Follow-Up Survey 2

Staff Earn Degrees 3

Photography Class Starts January 21 3

Nursing Students Prepare Bulletin Boards 3

Scholarship Opportunities 3

From the President's Desk 4

Dr. Shull Joins Foundation 4

Long-awaited RN Program Begins



saying, "This is a wonderful and exciting opportunity for those who want to move up the career ladder. Many people have worked hard for at least a year, and now everything is coming together for us," she added. Orientation for the RN students was held January 11.

Dubbed ARNEC (Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium), the new program allows the six member colleges to accept initially up to ten students each in an RN transition program. ARNEC consortium director Jill Hasley, whose office is housed at Cossatot Community College of the University of Arkansas, was broadcast live on the large cont'd on page 2

The first group of prospective new RNs began classes at BRTC and at five other two-year colleges

around the state. BRTC's Nursing program director Ramonda Housh could hardly be more enthusiastic,

Important Dates

January 19

- PTK Blood Drive

March 8

- Advisory Dinner

March 9

- ECHO

March 11

- BRTC Foundation Board Meeting

March 15

- BRTC Health Fair

March 16

- PTK Blood Drive

March 21-25

- Spring Break

Guerra Awarded Hispanic Scholarship



From left: Dr. Roger Johnson, Hugo Guerra, and Dr. Jan Ziegler.

Hugo Guerra is the recipient of the first scholarship provided by BRTC for Hispanic students. The \$500 award is a product of H.O.P.E., or Hispanic Outreach Project for Education. Announcement of the award was made by Dr. Roger Johnson

and Dr. Jan Ziegler who are active in the organization.

The H.O.P.E. scholarship is awarded to students who have immigrated from a Spanish speaking country and/or those who are second generation Hispanics, pursuing a certificate or associate degree at BRTC.

"We congratulate Hugo, who has demonstrated a willingness to work hard at his studies during his first semester here," Dr. Johnson said.

Guerra, a resident of Maynard, is a native of Mexico. He is enrolled in his second semester at BRTC, having accumulated a 4.0 GPA during his first semester. Guerra indicated he plans to complete his two-year de-

gree at BRTC before transferring to a university to study environmental biology.

The scholarship, according to Dr. Ziegler, reflects a growing effort on the part of BRTC to encourage the growing Hispanic community in BRTC's service area to consider the education options at the Pocahontas and Paragould campuses, and especially "to affirm to those whose native language is not English that BRTC offers an open and welcoming environment."

Individuals or businesses interested in supporting this scholarship initiative may do so by contacting Vickie French and the BRTC Foundation at 870-248-4000.

RN Program

Continued from page 1

television monitors in the new ITV (Instructional Television) classroom at BRTC for the students' orientation. The RN program is open to Licensed Practical Nurses and Licensed Psychiatric Treatment Nurses who have completed specified prerequisites. A total of nine students were selected for the first class, according to Academic Vice President Jack McCord. They will complete the year-long, three-semester program in December of this year.

Curriculum for the RN program consists of 65 total credit hours. Of these, 37 are Gen Ed credit hours, and 28 are in nursing. Students in this program attend class for theory Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and do clinicals every

Saturday, Housh explained. Clinical sites include St. Bernard's Regional Medical Center, Outpatient Urgent Care and Harvey Pediatrics in Jonesboro, Arkansas Methodist Medical Center in Paragould, Lawrence Memorial Hospital in Walnut Ridge and Randolph County Medical Center in Pocahontas.

Nurse Recruiter Angie Sterns, RN, of St. Bernard's said she also is "thrilled" with the ARNEC program, which she called "a remarkable approach to increase the supply of RNs." She noted that at least two of the six consortium member colleges will bring students to SBRMC for clinical rotations, and added, "This is a tremendous opportunity for nursing in Arkansas. There are LPNs work-

ing in every community who would like to further their education to become a registered nurse but do not have the time to do so."

In addition to Housh, BRTC nursing staff teaching components of the program are Sandra Green and Paula Lewis, with clinical supervision provided by Melissa Hawkins and Terri Baltz.

Instructional theory is delivered via distance technology in the ITV classroom by staff members from the various members of the consortia, with each nursing instructor teaching in the area of her specialty or special interest. For example, Housh explained, she, Jill Hasley, and a nursing instructor from El Dorado will rotate in teaching segments of the

pediatrics components, each of them from her respective home institution, with students at the other member colleges receiving the broadcast in real time. Special cameras and microphones allow the students in the distant locations to communicate with the instructor in real time. Students will put the theory into "practice" under the guidance and supervision of their classroom and clinical instructors.

The ITV classroom has been specially modified and equipped for this program, with carpeting to control background noise, internet connectivity and a telephone line for conference calling in the event of system problems.

Building Program to Result in New Campus Look

The proposed new Business Technology building is one step closer to becoming reality with the approval January 6 by the BRTC Board of Trustees of the construction of a new \$3.25 million facility. Construction of this structure will be an important move toward realizing the college's long-range building master plan, enhancing the work already done to improve the campus' overall appearance while providing top-rate educational facilities and technology.

told the BRTC Board members the structure should be ready for use in May of this year.

With the completion of the new AE/CE building, removal of the existing Adult Ed building can begin. The new 28,000 sq. ft. Business Tech. facility will include four computer labs, four business classrooms, twelve faculty offices and a large lecture hall, along with a community conference room and kitchen area.

In order to tie the facility in with

the RCDC, the faculty office area will extend across the west side of the development center, helping to achieve an integrated campus look, Williams explained, a goal identified in the college's master plan.

The two new buildings, as well as other physical plant upgrades and improvements, are being financed primarily through the sale of bonds,

money restricted for capital needs.



A.C. Williams, Architect, explains building project

The building will be built on the site of the existing Adult Education Building, between the Randolph County Development Center and existing Continuing Education facility. Tentative plans call for an April bid date, with a projected completion of the new Technology facility by July of 2006.

This project is a follow-up phase of a nearly completed building project, a new Adult Education/Continuing Education building on the north edge of the Pocahontas campus. A. C. Williams, architect,

Graduate Follow-Up Survey

In a recent meeting of the BRTC Board of Trustees, Dr. Mike Sullens, Vice President of Student Services, reported on the results of data collected from the latest graduate follow-up survey. The survey was sent to 380 students who graduated from BRTC during the 2003-2004 academic year, and of those 380 students, 270 responded.

The data collected from the returned surveys show that 57% of the 2003-2004 graduates are employed in their field of training or a related field while 2.6% are employed, but not in their field of training or a related field. Fewer than 8% of the 2003-2004 graduates are unemployed, half of which are not currently seeking employment.

Survey results also show that 95, or 35 %, of the graduates who responded are continuing their education. This group of students includes both employed and unemployed numbers from the data previously mentioned.

Staff Earn Degrees



Dr. Michael Sullens

Several staff and faculty members from BRTC earned advanced degrees from Arkansas State University in December. Among them is Dr. Michael Sullens, who was awarded the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership

degree. Dr. Sullens is Vice President for Student Services.

Courtney Clements, instructor in English, was awarded the Specialist in Community College Teaching degree. Master of Science degrees in Vocational Technical Administration were awarded to business instructor Rhonda Stone, and to Cindy Robinett, Judy Bridges and Tammie Lemmons of Adult Education.

Sandy Davis-Baltz was awarded a Master of Arts degree from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Photography Class Starts January 21

The BRTC Continuing Education Department is offering an 8-hour Basic Photography Class. Individuals will learn practical applications in basic rules and guidelines of photography.

The class will be held on Fridays starting January 21 through February 11, from 11:30 a.m. –1:30 p.m. Serendipity Club members may choose to bring a brown bag lunch and arrive at 11:00 a.m.

James Throgmorton, owner of

Camera Corner Studios, will be the instructor. Each participant must bring his/her own 35mm camera and film.

Register at the Continuing Education Building daily from 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.—3:30 p.m. For more information or alternate registration, please call 870-248-4180. Deadline to register is Wednesday, January 19. Price for non-Serendipity members is \$40. Members pay half price.

Scholarship Opportunities Announced

BRTC students may still take advantage of several scholarship opportunities for the Spring 2005 semester, according to Brandi Chester of the Office of Financial Aid. These include scholarships from a variety of sources, public and private.

For example, Chester explained, the Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship program remains open, with

applications due January 31. These \$500 scholarships are available to single-parent students living in Randolph County with custody of a child, contingent upon fund availability.

In addition, BRTC administers the awarding of several privately funded scholarships, some of which have not yet been awarded for this spring semester.

Nursing Students Prepare Bulletin Boards



Ruth Russell and Charlotte Lay, Nursing Students

Each of the three nursing classes at BRTC has been assigned a monthly project of designing a bulletin board displayed in the Health building. The students are given a list of topics each month to choose from and are to research that topic and gather materials to display on their assigned board. Included in their choices are topics that coincide

with nationally recognized health topics for that month, such as “Breast Cancer Awareness Month,” which is currently featured on one of the boards.

The other bulletin boards on display this month include “Suicide Awareness” and “Diabetes Management.” Ramonda

Housh, Director of Nursing, said that not only is this a learning experience for the students, but it also provides valuable information to the public and helps to promote awareness for these health related issues of concern. She would like to encourage everyone to visit the Health department to view the bulletin boards each month.

February Black History Month At the Eddie Mae Herron Center in Pocahontas

- February 1-4 Display of “cotton sacks,” memorabilia by Anna Cook
- February 7-11 Story of the Underground Railway and Quilting
- February 14-18 Peanut Butter Making and Corn Grinding
- February 19 Hog butchering, lard rendering, sausage making
- February 25 Community Potluck
- Panel Discussion: Hoxie School Integration

Chester said her office also connects students with scholarships to be awarded by the Association of Arkansas Counties, earmarked for the children or grandchildren of county employees, with applications accepted through May 1.

Also available is a \$1,000 annual scholarship for Arkansas students, classified as at least a sophomore in a public health field, made possible

through the Arkansas Public Health Association. These applications are due March 16.

Students may obtain more information and applications in the Office of Financial Aid in Student Services on the Pocahontas campus, or in the office of the Greene County Industrial Training Center at the Paragould campus of BRTC.

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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.

The River's Edge is produced by the Office of Institutional Advancement.

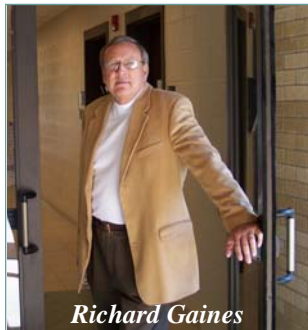
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From the President's Desk



Not only is this the start of a new semester for us here at BRTC, it also marks the beginning of a new program which will prove of major importance to our students, our community, and the entire state. The new RN program allows Licensed Practical Nurses to move up the career ladder, filling a well-documented need for Registered Nurses that exists not only in our area and our state, but around the nation. We are a part of a six-college member consortium in offering this program, and so we are sharing

resources and using distance technology to deliver the program jointly to our students and to those in the other colleges. Initially approved for up to ten students per college, we are hopeful this number may be increased as the program attains a track record.

Interestingly, though we imposed no such restrictions nor requirements, all those admitted to our first RN class happen to be LPNs who graduated from our own nursing program. We think that is a fit testimony as to the quality of our PN (Practical Nursing) degree, and we expect the same high quality of the RN program.

Other new developments on the horizon here at BRTC concern our building program as we move toward completing some of the long-term goals set out in the campus master plan. The next milestone will be the completion by the end of the semester of the new Adult Educa-

Dr. Shull Joins Foundation

Dr. Martha Shull of Jonesboro was confirmed by the BRTC Foundation Board as its newest member, bringing the total board size to fourteen. At a meeting of the Board on Friday, BRTC President Richard Gaines expressed his pleasure that the retired BRTC instructor and Division Chair is willing to return in this capacity to serve the college, calling her "energetic and resourceful."

Dr. Jan Ziegler, Director of Institutional Advancement, reviewed with the Foundation Board the accomplishments of the past year, and led discussion on potential Foundation development activities in the coming months. In addition to major gifts by retired businessman Dexter

Kimbrough of Pocahontas and by Steve Manley of Universal Asset Management, a number of new scholarships have been established.

The Foundation, she pointed out, has grown not only in number but in its capacity to engage in major fundraising efforts in such areas as endowments and annual campaigns.

Gaines explored with the Board funding needs the college may face in the future. "We are about as far as we can go on the level of funding we presently receive," he explained. "The current building projects should bring us where we need to be with regard to facilities for the foreseeable future, but the buildings themselves are only a part of the cost of providing educational programs."

tion/Continuing Education Building, and the bidding of our new Business Technology Building, funded primarily through the sale of bonds

restricted for capital projects.

New beginnings are always exciting, and this semester holds plenty of promise.