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"Historic Time" for Spring 2011 Graduates

Commencement speaker Dr. Ed Franklin told the large group of Spring 2011 graduates that they have completed their degrees during a "historic time" in the life of Black River Technical College.

The graduation event was held May 12 in a flood-damaged Randolph County Development Center, during a semester cut short by recent flooding. In addition, noted the director of the Arkansas Two-Year College Association, the ceremony marked the last such event for longtime BRTC President Richard Gaines, who is retiring June 30.

The class was also "historic" for another reason: the number of graduates - 205 - makes this the largest graduating class in the college's existence.

The students received a total of 220 degrees and certificates.



Stephanie Robinett is congratulated after the BRTC graduation ceremony Thursday evening where she was awarded an Associate of Arts degree.

Franklin stressed the event's significance for the students graduating, noting the statewide and national emphasis on degree attainment in recognition that a large percentage of jobs of the future will require a degree in higher education.

He also spoke of the many milestones the college has attained under Gaines' leadership, including the growth from less than fifty students when then-BRVTS (Black River Vocational Technical School) opened in 1973 to more than 2,500 students today.

(Continued on pg. 2)

Important Dates

- May 21**
Mr. & Miss Phi Theta Kappa 2011 Pageant
- May 31**
Summer I
- June 2**
Serendipity Banquet
- June 17-18**
Juneteenth Celebration
- June 22**
PTK Blood Drive
- June 28**
Retirement Reception for President Richard Gaines
- July 5**
Summer II

BRTC is Open, Ready for Summer Classes

In spite of considerable water damage to several of the buildings on the BRTC campus, the college is "open for business" with Intersession now underway and a full schedule of classes for Summer I set to begin on May 31, according to BRTC President Richard Gaines.

Students and prospective students will notice only minor changes, with the location of some classes changed due to repair work in the flood-affected buildings. Students should check the online schedule for class locations, advises Dr. Roger Johnson, VP for General Education.

Summer I Microbiology class will meet the first week on the BRTC campus, but will move to the Pocahontas Junior High campus after the first week where the lab component can be included. General Chemistry will

meet all semester in the new science wing at Pocahontas High School.



Buildings on the west side of the BRTC campus remain fenced off while work is in progress.

Flood damage resulted in no CVN classes being held on the Pocahontas campus, he added, but other than that, classes are proceeding as planned.

Registration for Summer I continues through May 26, with classes starting May 31. Registration for Summer II continues through June 30 with classes starting July 5. Registration for new and transfer students for the fall semester opens July 18 and runs through August 19. Classes begin August 22.

Gaines expressed appreciation to the staff for working diligently to relocate where necessary. "I know this has been a stressful time," he said, "but we are moving forward and we are ready to serve students just as we always have done."

Four Attend HLC Meeting in Chicago

Four representatives from BRTC attended the Annual Meeting of the North Central Association of the Higher Learning Commission in Chicago April 9-12. The conference attracts more than 3,500 attendees from institutions across the nation, and focuses on the accreditation requirements of its member colleges.

BRTC will undergo its comprehensive visit for re-accreditation in April, 2012, when a five-member evaluation team will spend approximately three days in review of the college.

Attending from BRTC were Priscilla Stillwell, Academic Coordinator for BRTC-Paragould; Dina Hufstedler, Project Specialist; Angie Caldwell, VP for Technical Education; and Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development and Self-Study Coordinator for the re-accreditation. Stillwell, Caldwell and Hufstedler are among the many BRTC faculty and staff who are working on various Self-Study committees as a part of the reaccreditation process.

Participants heard keynote addresses and chose from hundreds of break-out sessions concerning such issues as future challenges in higher education, assessing and improving student learning, challenges and opportunities for organizational leadership, and programs and structures that support student success. In addition, the meeting



Pictured from left: Dr. Jan Ziegler, Dina Hufstedler, Priscilla Stillwell, and Angie Caldwell.

included a "Self-Study Fair," and hundreds of vendors with new educational products and services. The event provided opportunity for attendees to meet colleagues in other like institutions, to network or take part in roundtable discussions, and also to meet with their respective HLC liaison for consultation on upcoming site visits.

Ziegler was a presenter at one of the sessions, providing a video and PowerPoint summary of the topic, "Connecting Student Learning to Historic Preservation: REACH Enhances College Experience."

"Historic Time" Cont'd. from Pg. 1

Class spokesperson Tiffany Daughhete acknowledged the debt she and her peers owe to those who supported the students' efforts. She also urged her fellow classmates to follow the example of inventor Thomas Edison in persevering and never giving up on their goals and dreams.

Vice Presidents Dr. Roger Johnson and Angie Caldwell, along with President Gaines and Dr. Franklin, presented diplomas to the graduates. Dr. Johnson presented academic awards to students in the General Education program, while Caldwell presented awards to those in technical programs.



Spring 2011 graduation is bittersweet for President Richard Gaines.

Manley and Vowell Each Awarded Two Foundation Scholarships

High school seniors Mikaela Manley and Cody Vowell have each been awarded the BRTC President's Scholarship for Health Education and the BRTC Foundation Scholarship for Technical Education for the 2011-2012 academic year.

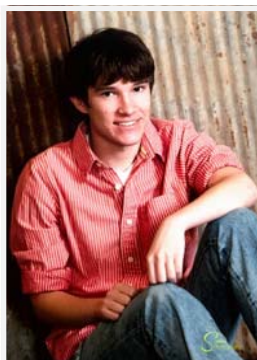
Each Scholarship is worth \$1,000 per semester for two semesters provided the recipient maintains a cumulative GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale and completes a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. Selections are based on ACT or ASSET scores, high school transcript, and a self-descriptive essay written by the applicant.

Manley is the daughter of Elton Manley of Marion and Sherry Manley of Southhaven, MS, and will graduate this week from Pocahontas High School. She plans to pursue a career in nursing, either as a nurse practitioner or an obstetrics nurse.



Mikaela Manley

Vowell will be graduating this week from Corning High School. He is the son of Philip and Marsha Flurry, and Randy and Sandy Vowell, all of Corning. He plans to pursue a career in the medical field.



Cody Vowell

Griggs is Awarded Memorial Scholarship

Amy Griggs of Maynard has been awarded the Phillip Collins II & Beth Collins-Bagwell Memorial Scholarship for 2011-2012 at BRTC.



Amy Griggs

The scholarship is worth \$1,000 per semester for two semesters provided the recipient maintains a cumulative GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale and completes a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. Applicants must be pursuing a healthcare-related certificate or degree at BRTC.

The Collins Family selects the recipient based on ACT or ASSET scores, high school transcript, and a self-descriptive essay written by the applicant.

Griggs is the daughter of Donny and Sherry Griggs of Maynard and is a 2008 Maynard High School graduate. She plans to pursue the RN degree at BRTC.

BRTC Business Instructors Spend Spring Break in China

During the Spring 2011 break, BRTC Business Instructors Debbie Prichard and Ruth Schaa embarked on a seventeen-hour flight for a visit with Prichard's sister and brother-in-law, and for touring Hong Kong and parts of mainland China. The adventuresome trip included ferry rides, sightseeing and shopping the open vendors' market in Hong Kong, formerly under the rule of Great Britain, along with a four-day excursion to sites of interest in and around Beijing, capital city of the ancient nation.

"At Stanley Market, we saw almost everything ranging from clothing, jewelry, jade carving and shoes to fresh seafood," Prichard said. "Most of the seafood is alive and either stored in fish tanks or cages; the poultry and fowl were dead," she added, "but the birds did retain their heads to show the buyers that it truly was duck, chicken, etc."

Prichard, Schaa and Janieca (Thielemier) Penn were accompanied by an English-speaking tour guide as their private van traveled in and around Beijing, tied with New York City for being one of the world's most expensive cities.

The trio visited a silk factory, a jade factory, along with the Temple of the Heavens, and the Olympic Stadium, the "Bird's Nest" and the "Cube." They describe as especially "magnificent" their visit to the Great Wall of China,



Debbie Prichard (center) and Ruth Schaa (at right), stand with Prichard's sister Janieca Penn outside the Forbidden City where a portrait of Chairman Mao hangs above the entry.

including the cable car ride up and down the structure built for defense against invaders, and designed with steps of varying heights so as to deny the enemy a chance to establish a cadence in the event of an attack.

Even more memorable was their visit to three of the country's singularly important historical sites: Tiananmen Square, the Summer Palace, and the Forbidden City. The week also included a visit to the Hutong Gardens, a rickshaw ride, and an enlightening visit in a typical Chinese home where they enjoyed lunch with an ordinary Chinese family.

Upon returning to Hong Kong, the travelers made their way up to Victoria Peak, taking the funicular down the peak, riding backwards so as not to fall from their seats on the steep slope. A final attraction included a ferry boat trip to the old Portuguese city of Macau, home of the world's largest gambling location. Their trip home routed them through Tokyo,

where the Narita Airport stood nearly deserted in the wake of the devastating tsunami that had destroyed the nuclear reactor plants in Japan.

Among the things Prichard and Schaa say they learned on this incredible trip: "Make sure your debit card bank knows which cities you will be in; you better love to eat rice, rice, and more rice; and the Chinese people are very curious especially if you are tall and/or blonde.

Milestone and Retiree Presentations Made at BRTC Potluck

The end-of-semester potluck for BRTC faculty and staff was held May 11 at which time presentations were made for Milestone Awards and Retirees. The 2011 Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC) Award winners were also announced.

Milestone Awards are presented to BRTC faculty and staff for every five years of employment with the college. Those receiving a key chain for five years were: Suzette Hicks, Laddie Hunter, Janet Murrell, Steve Shults, Helen Shipley, Tom Baker, Jared Bassham and Julie Edington. Receiving a lapel pin for ten years: Steve Williams, Courtney Clements, Gary Buxton, Karen Liebhaber, Linda Stacy, Sandy Davis-Baltz, Travis DeClerk, Victoria Robinett, Tina Harris, Brandi Chester, Rhonda Stone, and Sherry Griggs. Receiving a pen set for 15 years: Linda Moss, Dr. Charlotte Power, Cindy Robinett and Ruth Schaa. Vickie French and Kim White each received a brass coin paperweight for 20 years. Vernon Cates received a watch for 30 years.

Board Chair Mike Dunn presented plaques for "dedicated service to Black River Technical College" to Business Instructor Kay Ellis, Nursing Instructor Judy Forrester and President Richard Gaines. Both Ellis and Forrester retired after completing the Spring 2011 Semester, and Gaines will be retiring effective June 30. Ellis has been with BRTC since September 1991; Forrester since January 1989; and Gaines since January 1973.

The 2011 AATYC Award winners are Outstanding Faculty – Joniece Trammel, Fine Arts Musical instructor; Outstanding Staff – Katrina Bozarth – Administration Specialist, Paragould campus; and Outstanding Alumnus – Natasha Rush. The Academic All-Star will be announced at a later time.



BRTC Board Chair Mike Dunn presents Milestone Awards to (pictured at left, top to bottom) Vernon Cates, 30 years of employment; Kim White, 20 years of employment; and Vickie French, also 20 years of employment. Dunn also presented plaques to retirees (pictured at right, top to bottom) Judy Forrester, Kay Ellis, and Richard Gaines.





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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.

Campus Commentary



*Mike Greene
Director of Computer Services*

"How high's the water Mama?" Johnny Cash would have needed to write another twenty or so verses to document what happened to Black River and the surrounding areas, including the BRTC-Pocahontas campus. Thankfully the damage on campus has been purely physical and is the kind that can be fixed by large sums of money.

From the IT perspective, we've seen approximately 23% of all of

BRTC computers suffer water damage and an additional 15% are currently going through rehab. With more than a third of our computers down, the Department of Computer Services now has an easy answer to that perennial question of faculty returning in the fall - "What did you do during the summer?"

Before the animals started lining up in pairs on the side of the road we already had several projects lined up for the summer.

Internally, the most interesting of those projects will be the implementation of a document imaging system for the Department of Student Services. This system will be BRTC's first foray into document imaging and will give Student Services' personnel much more efficient access to student documents.

While we're not using the word "paperless" just yet, we're certainly taking a significant step in that direction.

BRTC Summer Hours

Monday - Thursday, 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Paper is also driving our second big project of the summer. Starting this summer we will begin rolling out a system to regulate student printing in the computer labs. At the beginning of each semester, students will be given a print quota that is reduced each time they print by the number of pages they are printing. If students deplete their quota, they can purchase additional points. The goal of this system is to curtail some of the more blatant wastes of printer paper.

Along with this system, we will also be taking a hard look at some of the printing requirements that we've put on our students and we will try to identify areas where we can either present these materials in a different fashion or have them printed in a more efficient manner.

In the long term, I think everyone

will come to appreciate the new system, especially when we finally get to play with some of the more interesting features such as allowing students to print from their wireless devices.

Other projects planned for the summer include a major upgrade to CampusConnect, which should make it much (much, much) faster, a major upgrade to Moodle which should give us a lot of cool new functionality, and possibly an upgrade to our wireless systems to try to keep pace with the explosion of wireless devices that we all seem to love to carry around.

If, by the beginning of the fall semester, all of the summer projects are up and going and all of the water-logged computers are back in their places, then we'll be a happy department.