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Accreditation Team Recommends Ten More Years, "100%" DE Approval

BRTC has received notification from the Higher Learning Commission that the preliminary report on the college's comprehensive evaluation visit has recommended the institution be re-accredited for another ten-year cycle. The report also gives a preliminary nod to a "Request for Institutional Change" to accredit the college's Distance Education program, according to VP for Development Dr. Jan Ziegler, Self-Study Coordinator.



Dr. Wayne Hatcher addressing faculty and staff at inservice.

"We are very pleased with the visiting team's findings," Ziegler said. "The entire college worked very hard for a year or so in preparation for the accreditation team visit in April," she said, then added, "though this favorable outcome is more a result of continuous

effort to improve and to maintain high quality rather than being just a sprint to the site visit."

The team visit included interviews and discussions not only with BRTC Board of Trustees, faculty and staff, but with many members of the community in order to determine whether the college is fulfilling its mission to "internal and external constituencies," noted BRTC President Dr. Wayne Hatcher. "We are aware of the tremendous support many community members gave during the accreditation visit, and we appreciate this

support very much."

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Important Dates

- September 3**
Labor Day Holiday - Campus Closed
- September 4-5**
PTK Blood Drive
- September 8 & 22**
REACH Sites Open
- September 10 & 11**
Dave Rudolf Beach Party and Workshops
- September 14**
Serendipity Begins New Year
- October 5**
IBERIABANK/BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament

BRTC Awarded "Plus 50" Grant

Black River Technical College was recently selected to join a national program designed to train 10,000 baby boomers for new jobs in healthcare, education, and social services. The program is sponsored by the American Association of Community Colleges.

Under the direction of Patti Blaxton, Director of Corporate and Community Education on the Pocahontas campus of BRTC, the college will be part of the Plus 50 Encore Completion Program and will assist adults age 50 and over in completing degrees or certificates in in-demand occupations that give back to the community.

"We are extremely pleased to have been selected," said BRTC President Wayne Hatcher. "The Plus 50 student cohort was hard hit by the recession, and many are now working to recoup lost investments and re-focus their lives. They need to upgrade their skills and earn new degrees or certificates from community colleges in order to get a job. BRTC is ideally structured to offer plus 50 adults options and benefits, including easy and affordable access, flexible schedules, and long-and short-term programs."

Blaxton, with assistance from VP for Development Dr. Jan Ziegler, BRTC's three-year program will strengthen support services for Plus 50 students in order to ensure more completers in degree and certificate programs, especially in the fields of health care. At BRTC, these programs are CNA, LPN, and RN; Dietetics and Dietary



Patti Blaxton, Director of Corporate and Community Education, and Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development, review new grant.

In accordance with the grant application developed by

(Continued on pg. 3)

New Positions Added; Staff Changes Announced



Trisha Aube



Elizabeth Collins



Mack Downey



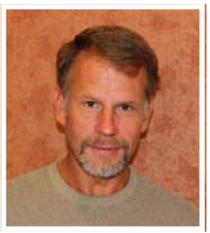
Rhonda Foster



Sissy Gray



Tina Harris



Mark Herbstreit



Amanda Herring



Chris Lynch



Regina Moore



Kathy Murdock



Teresa Shepherd



Audrey Skaggs



Jessica Throesch



Renee Zimmerman

Julie Edington, Human Resources Director at BRTC, has announced additions and changes to personnel.

Trisha Aube has been hired as Cashier for the bookstore on BRTC's Pocahontas campus. She has lived the past ten years in Pocahontas, but was raised in California. Prior to joining the BRTC staff, she worked for seven years as a cashier at Wal-Mart. She holds certificates in Administrative Services, Medical Coding, and Medical Transcription, all from BRTC.

Elizabeth Collins of Walnut Ridge has been hired as full-time instructor of English and Literature on the Paragould campus. She has been a temporary instructor at BRTC for the past three years and also taught for one year at Arkansas State University. She earned an AA degree from BRTC and also holds BA and MA degrees in English from ASU.

Mack Downey of Pocahontas will be teaching business classes on both the Pocahontas and Paragould campuses. He has been an adjunct instructor for BRTC for the past two years while also working as a paramedic for MedicOne for the past four years. He holds a BS in Health Care degree and an MA in Management degree, both from Bellevue University in Memphis.

Rhonda Foster has been named the new Coordinator of Concurrent Enrollment in addition to her

role as Coordinator of Student Recruitment in the Office of Development. She worked for 12 years as Director of Marketing at Harris Hospital in Newport and 11 years as Director of Human Resources for Randolph

County Medical Center before joining BRTC in 2007. She holds a BA in Marketing from Harding University and an MS in College Student Personnel from Arkansas Tech University.

Sissy Gray of Hardy has been hired to teach Intro to Psychology and Human Growth & Development on the Pocahontas campus. She holds a BS in Psychology degree from Harding University, MS in Clinical Psychology degree from Missouri State University in Springfield, and SCCT certification from ASU. She is a licensed psychological examiner and has been working at Clinical Neuropsychology in Jonesboro. She has taught adjunct classes for two years at BRTC.

Tina Harris has been named Program Director of Dietetics as well as Business Department Head. After earning her AAS in Dietetics degree from BRTC in 1998, she began teaching dietetics classes at BRTC while managing the BRTC cafeteria. She earned her BS in Dietetics degree from University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and then became Program Director of the Dietary Mangers Certificate Program. She recently earned an MA in Organizational Management degree from Ashford University in Clinton, Iowa. She resides in Dalton.

Mark Herbstreit of Bono is the new Aviation instructor for BRTC. He earned his Airframe and

Powerplant certification from Community College of the Air Force, where he served for over 20 years. He joined BRTC as an adjunct aviation instructor in 2011. He also has experience with various jobs in aviation maintenance and mechanics.

Amanda Herring of Paragould has been hired to teach science on the Paragould campus. She holds both a BSE in General Science degree and an MSE in Science degree from ASU. She has been teaching chemistry, physical science, and physics at Hoxie High School since 2004.

Chris Lynch will be teaching chemistry and physical science at the Pocahontas campus. He has taught Physics as an adjunct instructor for BRTC in the past. He has been working as a Science Specialist at Northeast Arkansas Education Cooperative in Walnut Ridge. He holds BS and MSE in Physics and Math degrees from ASU.

Regina Moore of Dalton has been named the new Director of Distance Education. She replaces Karen Liebhaber who returned to the classroom to teach English full time. Moore has been serving as Distance Education Program Coordinator for the past three years. Prior to that, she served six years as Administrative Secretary to the Vice President for Student Services. She holds an MS degree from Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, a BA degree from University of Arkansas in Little Rock, and an AA degree from BRTC.

Kathy Murdock of Maynard has been hired as a Dietetics instructor. She has been teaching as an adjunct instructor of dietetics since January 2011. She has also been working for the past five years as dietary supervisor at Five Rivers Medical Center. In 2008 she received her AS in Dietetics degree from BRTC and in 2012

(Continued on pg. 3)

“Hired To Be Rewired” Encourages Change

Change—how it happens, how the world has changed, and how we can change ourselves—was the focus of a professional development session for BRTC faculty and staff during an inservice meeting held last week. The presenter was motivational speaker and native Arkansan Randy Frazier of Leadership Takes Courage.

The speaker's own homespun version of life, with apologies to Forrest Gump, is this: “Life is not like a box of chocolates. Life is like a vending machine. You can get almost anything you want. It just takes a little change.”

Frazier's uplifting message, even as he provided provocative and often humorous insights about change, challenged his audience to seek always to “give more than necessary to improve someone's life.” Using poignant stories of his own farm family

background, he reminded listeners that “not every change is good, but everything good came about by change.”

Frazier entertained as he educated his audience on such matters as how the brain works (“like a team of rivals”), how complex and capable an organ the brain is (“Our brain never totally fills up”), how we can maximize our brain's capacity (“The human brain has incredible capacity to recall images”) and how what we see depends on our filters (“Our brains can be wrong in what they tell us we are seeing”).

Just as all people have an actual “blind spot” in each eye, a phenomenon the speaker demonstrated, all people also have blind spots in their own self-perception, he explained. For this reason, he suggested, “I should ask those I really trust if I want to

learn the way I really am seen by others. We stand in our own blind spot,” he added.

Frazier concluded the presentation by advocating that “we are meant to change, we have the opportunity to change, and we have the power to change.” In so doing, he concluded, people then are able to “live along the edge.”



Randy Frazier

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she received her BS in Health Science with an emphasis in Dietetics from University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. In May she became a Registered Licensed Dietician.

Teresa Shepherd of Supply has begun working the day shift as Institutional Services Assistant. She began working at BRTC a year ago and has been working the night shift. Prior to that, she ran her own cleaning service for ten years.

Audrey Skaggs of Brookland has been hired to teach Anatomy & Physiology, General Biology, and Microbiology. She holds a BS in Clinical Lab Sciences and an MS in Health Science and Education from ASU where she has also taught online science classes. Previously she worked as a Med Tech at NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital.

Jessica Throesch of Pocahontas has been hired as a Math Instructor. She has taught as a full-time temp for BRTC for the past year. Previously, she taught math at Hoxie High School and East Poinsett County High School. She holds a BA in Math from Lyon College and an MS in Math Education from the University of Central Arkansas.

Renee Zimmerman has been hired to teach math in Paragould. She has taught math at ASU, Greene County Tech High School, and Paragould High School. Also, she trained to operate a nuclear reactor plant while in the Navy. She holds BS and MS degrees in math from ASU.

“Plus 50”

Management; Health Information, Medical Coding and Medical Transcription; Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic; and Phlebotomy and Respiratory Care Technician. These services the grant will provide include support in orientation, advising, and counseling, financial aid assistance, and computer technology skills building. In addition, according to Blaxton, Plus 50 students will have access to math and English refresher courses and to job search and interview skills.

“We already offer many programs and services for adults over 50 years,” Blaxton noted, “but this grant will allow us to do even more at low cost to the student.”

In addition to grant funds, BRTC and the other ten participating colleges gain access to thousands of dollars in marketing materials, such as toolkits and training webinars to make the work of reaching out to students age 50 and over easier. They will also benefit from the advice and support of staff at other community colleges that have successfully implemented programs for older learners and understand their unique needs.

“Baby boomers are not like traditional college students. We find that colleges need to adapt how they operate to support their job training needs and educational services,” said Mary Sue Vickers, director for the Plus 50 Initiative at AACC.

The Plus 50 Encore Completion Program is funded with a grant over three years to the AACC provided by Deerbrook Charitable Trust.

Cont'd. from pg. 1

Approval

Cont'd. from pg. 1

The four team members had already reviewed hundreds of online documents as well as the college's extensive Self-Study report to assess the college's fulfillment of the criteria necessary for accreditation. The team concurred that the college satisfies the required criteria and core components, but will be asked to complete a single follow-up report on Assessment of Student Learning in three years, according to the report. “We had anticipated this,” Ziegler said, “and have already begun to take steps to address this area.”

“What caught us by surprise in a very positive way was that the team recognized the level of excellence we have achieved and is recommending that we be allowed to offer 100% of our degree offerings via distance education,” Ziegler said. “This means that we are authorized to increase the courses and degree programs available through distance education without having to go back to the HLC each time we want to expand that program.” She credited the meticulous planning and work of former DE Coordinator Karen Liebhaber and Regina Moore (who has assumed duties as DE Coordinator) in this accomplishment.

The award is in the amount of \$1,000 per semester provided the recipient maintains a 2.5 GPA and is enrolled full time. The scholarship was established by Phil and Carolyn Collins of Paragould in memory of their children.



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Campus Commentary...



Dr. Wayne Hatcher

“Reclaiming the American Dream” was the focus of our opening session for the fall semester this year—and with good reason. This landmark report by the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges gives us all plenty to ponder as we begin a new academic year. A few of the key points of this report are these:

- For the first time in U. S. history, incoming freshmen are less educated than their parents.
- By the year 2018, about 2/3 of all jobs will require some sort of certificate or degree.
- There are many jobs available but we do not

have enough skilled people to fill them.

- Approximately 50% of those who initially enroll in community college won't be back the next year.
- Serious disconnects exist between high school, community colleges, and universities.

Our inservice included also a video based on a new CCSSE text, “Students Speak...Are We Listening?” This video reflected many of the issues and challenges from a student perspective, based on established research. Students make clear the important actions colleges can take to help ensure the students succeed, that they persist and earn a certificate or degree, that they are ready to take the next step in university study or entry into the world of work. Here's what they said they need, and yes, BRTC is listening:

- Orientation to college with personal interaction (not just online orientation);
- An academic and career plan for each student so everyone understands from the beginning where they are headed;
- An effective college success class to help students transition into higher education;
- High academic expectations from their instruc-

tors;

- Active engagement in the learning, in and out of class;
- Quality Support Services to help overcome barriers.

You will see new campus-wide initiatives and renewed emphasis and commitments to meeting these needs in this new academic year. Some steps have already been taken, such as construction of a new Success Lab that will be supervised by a fulltime professional, accelerated learning initiatives, modular learning, merged/dual courses, focus on high academic expectations and on ways faculty can better engage students in and out of the classroom. Other steps will follow, including implementation of a college success class, purposeful professional development for faculty and staff, and enhanced advisement to ensure every student has that academic plan from day one.

BRTC is committed to doing our part in helping those we serve in their efforts toward “Reclaiming the American Dream.” We are ready. Our faculty and staff are capable—and they care about you. This college will find ways to allocate the resources necessary, because we understand “it takes a college to educate a student.”