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Distance Education

Important Dates

- January 20**
Martin Luther King Day
- January 21-22**
PTK Blood Drive, RCDC
- February**
Black History Month
- March 24-28**
Spring Break
- April 7**
Registration Begins for returning students
- April 14**
Registration begins for first-time and transferring students

Over \$2,000 Raised at MSSPS Auction

A total of \$2,731 was raised during December's Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship Auction, according to MSSPS Chair Janna Guthrey, organizer of the event. The amount raised each year for MSSPS is matched at 160% by the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund, which includes contributions from Entergy and United Way.



LETA instructors Christy Jeffery (from left), Darren Plaster (behind Jeffery) and Jared Bassham, along with nursing instructors Bridgette Kasinger and Ramonda Housh, display items at the MSSPS auction.

The annual event is held at the conclusion of the fall semester-end staff potluck and consists of live and silent auctions and a ticket table, with all items donated by BRTC faculty and staff.

LETA faculty served as an auctioneer team in competition with the challenging team of Nursing faculty. Items auctioned by the LETA team raised the most money and earned them the right to challenge a team at next year's event.

"I sincerely appreciate everyone who contributed to the success of the auction," said Guthrey. "From donating items, to purchasing items, to setting up and cleaning

up, to selling tickets and collecting money," she continued, "the words 'thank you' do not begin to express the gratitude I feel."

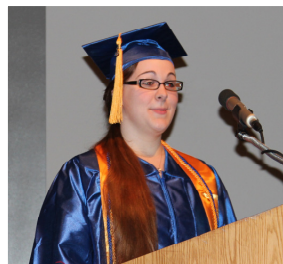
In addition to staff, members of the BRTC Board of Trustees and the BRTC Foundation Board also participated in the event.

BRTC's Single Parent Scholarship program, named after long time Pocahontas educator Mary Sallee, provides assistance to eligible single parents living in Randolph County and enrolled in an institution of higher education.

Since its inception in 1992, the organization has raised more than \$163,000 and 382 scholarships have been awarded. In addition to the annual auction, the MSSPS fund receives support from grants, special events, the BRTC Foundation, and individual BRTC staff members through payroll deductions.

For more information on MSSPS or to make a contribution to the program, contact Guthrey or Vickie French at 870-248-4000.

BRTC Graduation Held for 344 Students



Cierra Wrench

BRTC commencement exercises were held December 12 in the Randolph County Development Center to recognize 344 students, according to Carolyn Collins, Interim VP for Student Services. The actual number of degrees awarded for the Fall 2012 semester totaled 445, as some of the students completed more than one certification. Separate commencement ceremonies for graduates in Nursing, Respiratory Care, and Law Enforcement were held previously. In addition to the 344 graduating in December, an additional 85 individuals received the GED (General Education Diploma).

Wayne Hatcher and awarded by Dr. Roger Johnson, VP for General Education, and Angie Caldwell, VP for Technical Education. The degrees awarded included two-year Associate of Arts and Associate of Applied Science degrees, as well as one-year Certificates, one-semester Certificates of Proficiency, and GEDs.

Cierra Wrench of Imboden and candidate for the Associate of Arts degree, served as Graduate Candidate Spokesperson. As she addressed the graduates, she encouraged them to continue learning and growing and said their education should not end with graduation.

Dr. Jan Ziegler, former VP for Development at BRTC, served as keynote speaker and talked to students about making decisions of "what to hold on to and what to let go of as we continue through the journey of life." In pointing out some important things to let go of, she

Degrees were conferred by BRTC President Dr.

(Continued on pg. 2)

Five Complete First Six Sigma Black Belt Training Program

Black River Technical College in collaboration with the Greene County Industrial Training Center recently held its first Certified Six Sigma Black Belt (CSSBB) training program on the Paragould campus, with five individuals earning their certification.

"This was the first group to receive the Black Belt certification at BRTC," said Dana Bradford, BRTC's Department of Corporate and Community Education in Paragould. "Individuals have completed the Certified Six Sigma Green Belt (CSSGB) training first offered at BRTC in 2007, but this was the first group to complete the Black Belt program."

Completing the program were: Tom Hazelwood, Darrell McCreeless, and Lynn McCoy with ARI (American Railcar Industries); and Charles Harris and Kerry Pugh with Southworth Products.

The Six Sigma professional development training program is designed to improve the quality of process outputs by identifying and removing the causes of errors and minimizing variability in manufacturing and business processes, according to the Six Sigma website. The program is designed for organizations that want to develop employees to be supply chain, logistics, and problem solving experts. The end result is an effectively completed improvement initiative.

Each of the participants first completed the prerequisite 80-hour Green Belt course at BRTC before they were permitted to enter the Black Belt class.

The Black Belt course also consisted of 80 hours and spanned 10 weeks in an active learning environment with rigorous training while performing actual improvement projects in the workplace. After completion of the course, participants received Black Belt Six Sigma certification from BRTC and complete preparation to take the ASQ Black Belt Certification Exam.

Scott Follett, Six Sigma Master Black Belt, was the instructor for the course. He has over 20 years of experience in industry and quality assurance.

For more information on the Six Sigma certification program, contact Bradford at 870-239-0969, ext. 5210.



The five individuals to complete the first Six Sigma Black Belt certification program held at BRTC are, pictured left to right: Tom Hazelwood, ARI; Charles Harris, Southworth Products; Kerry Pugh, Southworth Products; Darrell McCreeless, ARI; and Lynn McCoy, ARI; with instructor Scott Follett.

Graduation Cont'd. from Pg. 1

said "we should let go of the fear of failure and hold on to a confidence that even in failing at something we will be able to find something positive that comes from it." She also echoed Wrench's sentiments when she told the students to "let go of the thought that with graduation we are fully 'educated,' and realize that learning should never stop."



Dr. Jan Ziegler

Ziegler retired at the conclusion of the fall semester after 20 years at BRTC where she had served as instructor of German, English and The Holocaust as well as Division Chair of Gen Ed and Director of Planning and Assessment before becoming VP in 2003. She is a published author and freelance writer who holds an Ed.D in Higher Education Leadership, an MA in English, and a BA in French/English, all from Arkansas State University, and an MA in German Studies from the University of New Mexico.

Student Wins \$100 for Participating in Bookstore Survey

Tisha Olson of Black Rock recently won \$100 for participating in a survey through the Black River Technical College bookstore. BRTC was selected to participate in the Student Watch 2014 Research Study sponsored by the NACS Foundation (National Association of College Stores), according to Janice Harvey, Bookstore Manager. The survey is conducted twice a year to study different aspects of the college stores in higher education.

"Emails were sent to the students from the bookstore and the students took the survey anonymously," Harvey explained. "We had 151 students participate." Before exiting the survey, each student had the option to provide an email address to be entered into a cash drawing. One student from each participating college was selected to receive \$100, and one student among all participating colleges will receive \$1,000.

On November 13, Olson received the email letting her know that she had won the \$100 for participating in the survey and that she was eligible for the \$1,000 drawing. Olson is working towards an AA degree at BRTC.

Another survey will be held in February, although dates have not been set. Survey information will be sent to students through their BRTC email account and information will also be posted on the Poca-hontas and Paragould campuses, on the bookstore website, and through other BRTC media.



Bookstore Manager Janice Harvey (left) presents a \$100 check to Tisha Olson.

PBL Finishes Busy Fall Semester with Four Events

BRTC's Chapter of Phi Beta Lambda (PBL), the collegiate level of Future Business Leaders of America, finished the Fall 2013 semester with several events which included attending a Leadership Conference, holding a Halloween Costume Contest fundraiser, participating in mock interviews for students in a Technical Communications class, and giving presentations for American Enterprise Day.

PBL Leadership Conference - Ten students and two advisors of PBL attended the Fall 2013 PBL State Leadership Conference held October 25 at Arkansas State University – Mountain Home. Those attending were students Todd Wilcox, president; Shaunya Fraysher, vice-president; Tina Morrison, secretary; Shelaegh Bollinger; Barry Clayton; Secret England; Kaleb Hunt; Olen Hunt; Mikey Johnson; and Abbie Tolbert; and advisors Shannon Ogden and Ruth Schaa.



Pictured left to right are: Todd Wilcox, Tina Morrison, Kaleb Hunt, Abbie Tolbert, Olen Hunt, Shaunya Fraysher, and Secret England.

The conference began with Kim Worlow, keynote speaker during the opening session, who talked about qualities needed for leadership roles. Campaign speeches were held for PBL state officer positions and then attendees separated into four groups for round-robin break-out sessions: "Ace the Interview" by Tamara Mitchell; "Speak Up" by Carol Petty; "How to Get Rich" by Dr. Phillip Tew; and "Hire Me, Please" by Corinne Hiser.

"The 'Speak Up' session gave me more insight on how to speak in public and how to connect with the audience," said Bollinger. "The speakers were very knowledgeable," added Morrison. "It was a great experience."

Halloween Costume Contest - For the past three years, PBL has sponsored a Halloween costume contest to raise funds for charity. Proceeds the first two years went to the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Proceeds from this year's contest went to

the March of Dimes. According to Ruth Schaa, PBL advisor, the costume contest was in coordination with the ongoing March of Dimes "Change for Change" campaign to collect change in order to make a change in the number of premature births and birth defects. The one-day fundraising event raised over \$150.

Several students, faculty and staff from both campuses participated in the costume contest. Suz Mason won best costume on the Paragould campus as the flying monkey from the Wizard of Oz. On the Poca-hontas campus, twins Keri and Kera Hufford won first place with their peanut butter and jelly sandwich costume. Olive Garden donated two \$25 gift certificates to the campus winners.



Keri and Kera Hufford as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Interviews with Technical Students - Two members of PBL, Mikey Johnson and Todd Wilcox, played the role of employers for mock interviews held in Kay Ellis' Technical Communications class. Students participated in mock interviews for their final exam. "This served as a PBL community service project as well as a way to introduce PBL to other technical departments," said Schaa.

Johnson played the role of an entrepreneur with three moving companies and numerous entrepreneurial ventures,



Todd Wilcox (right) shakes hands with a Technical Communications student during a mock interview.

and Wilcox played the role of a manager with over 20 years of experience. They asked questions, provided feedback, and then scored students on appearance, mannerism, body language, communication skills and confidence.

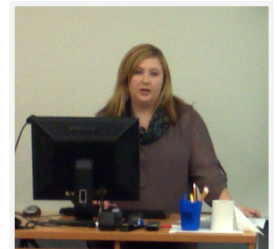
American Enterprise Day - November 15 is recognized by FBLA and PBL as American Enterprise Day to celebrate future business leaders and to publicize the importance of entrepreneurs and the

market system, free enterprise system or capitalism.

BRTC's chapter of PBL celebrated American Enterprise Day on November 14 with presentations by PBL members Ashlee Koth, Mikey Johnson, and Todd Wilcox. "The presentations were held in the CVN room during scheduled class times so that students on both campuses could participate and see the interrelatedness of education and entrepreneurship," Schaa explained.

Koth spoke about the business plan she wrote for her Small Business Management course, which won her \$100 during a small business plan contest sponsored by PBL.

Her plan included her own personal experience as a small business owner, including the hard work, long hours and challenges. She also talked about the Small Business Administration, establishing goals, developing a website, and advertising.



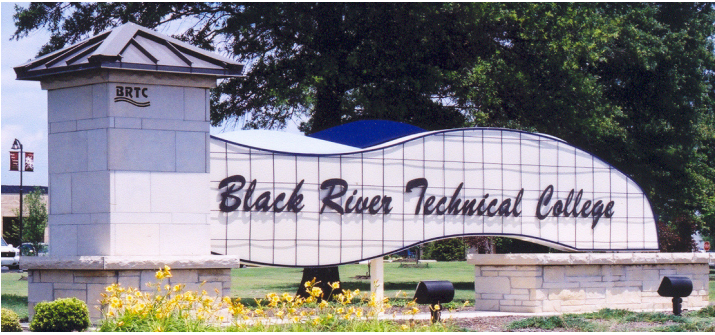
Ashlee Koth giving a presentation for American Enterprise Day.

Johnson talked about his moving business, which he started while stationed in Virginia and continued after moving back to Pocahontas. He also spoke about other business opportunities he has found along the way. While talking to students, he stressed the importance of low overhead and of showing appreciation to customers. Currently, he is looking for recreational opportunities that incorporate the five rivers that flow through the area and will boost the local economy through revenue and employment.

Wilcox expounded on the importance of management and employee relationships for the small business owner and the impact communication has on functionality. He said the owner /manager must be approachable and show appreciation for the employees, and he gave examples of other steps to take to create high morale among the workers, which in turn will result in greater productivity.

PBL is open to all college students regardless of their degree programs. "Students can develop business skill sets as a member of PBL and participating in PBL activities," said Schaa, "which will benefit them in their chosen careers either as a business owner or as an employee in a business."

For more information about PBL, contact Schaa or Shannon Ogden, advisors and business instructors, or Todd Wilcox, PBL president.



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BRTC Mission Statement

*Blending tradition, technology and innovation
to educate today's diverse students
for tomorrow's changing world.*

Campus Commentary...



Daniel Parker

DE Program Coordinator/Instructional Technology

There are a lot of exciting things happening in Distance Education at BRTC and I am pleased to share with you some of the projects we are currently undertaking, our goals for this year, as well as a glimpse into our enrollment numbers over the past five years.

Our four-week online course pilot program is underway, with the first batch of courses completed early January and the second beginning this week. These courses provide students the perfect opportunity to pick up extra hours or expedite graduation.

The following classes are offered for these slots during the spring term:

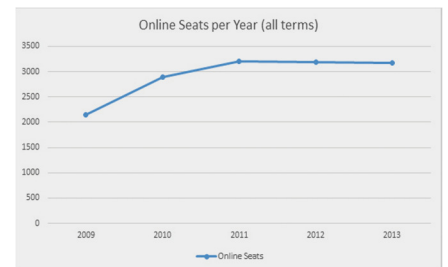
- January 13th – February 9th: Freshman English I; World Civ Since 1660
- February 10th – March 9th: Fine Arts Musical; Freshman English II
- March 10th – April 13th: Anthropology; Psychology
- April 14th – May 6th: College Algebra; World Literature I

There have been a few hiccups, but we anticipate the completion of our new DE office and instructional media studio early this spring. The instructional media studio will allow us to create quality audio and video in a controlled environment for our online and hybrid instructors. Among the items on our equipment list are professional microphones, a semi-professional digital camcorder, studio lighting, and an iMac with appropriate software that is capable of producing high grade digital audio and video productions.

Currently, BRTC does not offer a degree that is entirely online, although we are close. One of our top priorities this year is to make the Associate of Arts in General Education available completely online. Currently, we only lack three courses to

make this happen: Physical Science, Biology, and Oral Communication. We will be working with departments and instructors to ensure that we can place these courses online soon and allow students (and prospective students) in our area and beyond a chance to complete a program without having to step foot in a classroom.

Although the number of online seats (online enrollment) has recently peaked, we have grown significantly over the past five years and still holding strong. Since 2009, online seats have increased by 48%, as illustrated in the graph below.



We hope to see a significant growth as we place more classes online and prepare to offer BRTC's first fully online two-year degree.

I appreciate the instructors and administrators who have helped our online and hybrid programs grow and hope to continue to work with those old and new to improve and expand distance education offerings at BRTC.