

May 21, 2014

Student Services Updates

88th Commencement Ceremony on May 23rd:

Graduates will take their first step towards their future as Taft College celebrates its eighty-eighth commencement ceremony this Friday, May 23. Graduating students and Taft College faculty and staff will join in celebrating the achievements of the graduating students as a new chapter of their life begins as alums of Taft College.

This year's commencement ceremonies will begin at 7 p.m. at the Taft Union High School, Martin Memorial Stadium. This year the college will award confer Associate degrees or Certificates of Achievement to 344 students at Taft College. Of those, approximately 250 will be participating in commencement ceremonies. This number closely matches the number of students earning a degree in 2013 – a testament to the continued demand for access to higher education and all it brings to those pursuing a career in today's economy.

Five students have earned the highest achievement award, earning a perfect 4.0 cumulative GPA at the conclusion of the Fall 2014 semester. Three of these scholars will be addressing the graduating class during the commencement ceremony. All five students will receive a plaque in recognition of their academic achievement.

Athletic Update:

At the May 14, 2014 Board of Trustees meeting, Athletic Director Kanoe Bandy provided an update on the Athletic Program. Among the interesting items she shared at the meeting, she noted some important statistics about the 2013/14 graduating athletes:

Athlete Count

Time to Completion

Total Female Athletes: 21	4 semesters: 28
Total Male Athletes: 16	5 semesters: 5
Total Athlete Grads: 37	6 semesters (redshirts): 4

This past year, the Athletic Program underwent its Annual Program Review, a peer evaluation process within the California Community College Athletic Association Central Valley Conference. The visiting team met with representatives from Taft College on April 24, 2014. A final report from the visit is due soon.

DSPS/CalWORKS Luncheon

A joint EOPS and CalWORKS luncheon was held on May 15th to celebrate the accomplishments of the 48 CalWORKS and EOPS students who are applying for graduation this spring. The subject area with the highest number of graduates is Liberal Arts: Communication, and Life Science. Some students have



earned enough credits to be awarded double majors. In total, the two programs have served 237 students in 2013/14.

These programs assist disadvantaged students and are proven programs for student success/equity and retention. During the event, awards were presented to Professor Wendy Berry (Most Supportive Faculty Member), Alex Castro (Most Supportive Staff Member), and student Laura Martin (Outstanding Graduate). Awards for Student of the Month were also presented. Adjunct researcher and counselor Ms. Kizzy Lopez was the keynote speaker at the luncheon.

Instruction Updates

Building Bridges Conference

On April 25, Taft College participated in the 24th Annual Building Bridges Conference in Bakersfield. Among those attending, Professor Gary Graupman served as the *conference photographer*. He first became involved with Building Bridges in the 1990s when the event was held at the Rio Bravo Resort. He was first an attendee, then a presenter, the photographer, and lastly, a planning committee member. As of last year, he relinquished his position as a committee member, and this year was just an attendee and somehow got roped into doing the photos, yet again. He enjoys doing it especially because his friend Dr. Kim Flachmann suggested it. The Building Bridges Conference gives him a chance to keep abreast of developments, especially at the local level, in English, and provides the opportunity to socialize with old friends and make new ones.

At the conference, Dan Hall and Kelly Kulzer-Reyes gave a presentation at Building Bridges 2014 entitled "*Flippin' Classroom.*" The presentation included lively banter, classroom examples, and screen casting technology. Dan shared much of the background of flipping classrooms, its definition, the potential lecture content, and the various classroom activities to reinforce and apply the content. Later, Kelly showed examples of classroom lessons and video feedback she has used with her second language writing students.

Many of the attendants were high school instructors who struggle with technology restrictions, so Hall and Kulzer-Reyes adapted the presentation to address the challenges of firewalls, web hosting, and Internet restrictions.

Jessica Grimes co-presented on "*Student Learning Outcomes in College Courses*" with Ed Barton, incoming Chair of English at Bakersfield College, and Dr. Kim Flachmann, Writing Program Director and professor at California State University, Bakersfield. Each speaker discussed the evolution of Student Learning Outcomes on his/her respective campuses and how these benchmarks have become integral to curriculum development and ongoing revision. Since this session's target audience was high school administrators and instructors, the purpose of the discussion was to inform as well as cultivate smoother pathways of transition for high school students transitioning to colleges and/or universities. Future discussions have already been planned to emphasize increasing understanding

between how the Common Core's standards can anticipate and/or align with Student Learning Outcomes.

Last, Kamala Carlson's presentation, "Connecting Campus Communities to Raise Literacy Across Disciplines" emphasized meta-cognitive reading strategies that can be employed, at all levels, to engage students, thus infusing them with skills for academic and career success. A dense booklet brimming with classroom tested strategies was given to attendees demonstrating that as students practice analyzing and reading texts closely, they will uncover content at a deeper level. This presentation was timely, since the implementation of Common Core in secondary education expects a high level of literacy across disciplines while community colleges are striving to increase persistence and retention rates of pre-collegiate students. As noted in the presentation, the demand for highly skilled employees who can think critically in the job market continues to be heard, therefore, our job as educators is to work together at all levels to increase student success.

Writer Daniel Chacon Visits Taft College

Where:
The Cougar Room

When:
1:10-2:25

FREE ADMISSION

Mr. Chacon will also be meeting with the Taft College Book Club!



Coming to Taft College, Tuesday May 6th!

Daniel Chacon

Author of *Hotel Juarez, Stories, Rooms and Loops*

Books will be on sale in the Taft College Bookstore for \$17.95.

Mr. Chacon will be signing copies after his presentation. Books will be on sale at the event!

Come join us for an afternoon full of great stories and advice from an award-winning author.

Daniel Chacon has been the recipient of the Hudson Prize, the American Book Award, a Christopher Isherwood Foundation Grant, and the Southwest Book Award. His first collection of stories, *Chicano Chicanery* was a finalist in the Patterson Fiction.



Professor Bill Devine invited former college classmate, friend, and writer Daniel Chacon to Taft College to share his writing process and inspire the hearts and minds of our Taft College students. Chacon is the author of four books, including *Unending Rooms*, winner of the Hudson Prize, *Chicano Chicanery*, and his new book, *Hotel Juarez, Stories, Rooms and Loops*. He delighted the Taft College Book Club with stories and revelations about his writing at a lunch provided by former Vice President of Instruction, Dr. Loretta Garcia Lipscomb.

Afterwards, Chacon spoke to Taft College students in the Cougar Room, revealing his own writing process, the organic sequence of discovery, subtle metaphor, and intuitive interconnection that leads to writing of long-lasting value and literary merit. Chacon's walk through Center Street of Taft also opened up his personal writing process to students, demonstrating the importance of detailed observation, the vital need for knowledge of history and culture, and how language can pull those threads together into

a story that reveals the unspoken, evolving character of a place, in this case, Taft.

Following a reading from his book and an informative dialogue and questions, Mr. Chacon signed copies of his book and spent time in individual discussions with interested students, discussing writing, philosophy, and culture. From there, Daniel could be seen back on the streets of the city, taking photos, and no doubt making inspired connections. Could a Taft story be far off? Thank you to Daniel Chacon for visiting Taft College and providing insights and inspiration.

STEMvitational Event

On Friday, May 2, 2014, the Taft College STEM Program hosted the first ever STEMvitational at Taft College. 160 high school seniors from throughout the WKCCD participated, including 8 from Maricopa, 20 from Buena Vista, and 132 from Taft Union. Students were exposed to various areas of STEM through several activities. Attendees heard



about others' experiences in STEM during a panel. They explored options in STEM with demonstrations in several areas by Math and Science faculty members, Mike Mayfield in Physical Sciences, Paul Blake in Engineering, Dr. Greg Golling in Life Sciences, and Ruby Payne, Diane Jones, Mariza Martinez, and Shelley Getty in Mathematics. After lunch, students were able to have their questions about their education answered by advisors and counselors at Taft College as well as play games with students from ASB.



Several groups on and off campus contributed to this event including the Math and Science Department, ASB, Athletics, IT, Taft College Food Services, the Taft College Foundation, Taft Union High School, Buena Vista High School, and Maricopa Unified Schools. This event would not have been possible without the collaborative effort of all of these people. It is due to these efforts that these high school seniors are more aware of their options in STEM at Taft College.

A Sharp Piece of Awesome Launch Party

On May 17th, over fifty students, staff and community members gathered at



Dagny's Coffee House to enjoy readings from the Taft College Literary Magazine *A Sharp Piece of Awesome*. The 4th Edition of the publication was introduced by UCLA-bound Taft College Student David Bailey, Editor-in-Chief of *A Sharp Piece of Awesome*, who also served as Master of Ceremonies for the reading.



Attendees were treated to selected readings by contributors to the publication and enjoyed socializing with authors and fellow literary aficionados. Kudos to all those who helped make this year's publication so special, and the launch party such a success! Particular thanks to professors Geoffrey Dyer and Bill Devine for their support of the student publication.

Faculty Appreciation Week

The Associated Student Body conducted a wonderful week of appreciation for the Taft College Faculty from May 5-9th. In addition to the delivery of pastries in



honor of Cinco de Mayo, along with a poster display in the Quad, festivities included a luncheon which recognized those faculty members with 15 more years of service as faculty members at Taft College.





Trustee Carolyn Hosking Retires

Trustee Carolyn Hosking has retired from the WKCCD Board of Trustees on May 15th after serving for 25 years! At her last Board Meeting as a Trustee on May 14th, the Board presented her with a Resolution for her “service as a committed, passionate and dedicated leader in promoting education and student success at Taft College.” Carolyn served in a variety of roles on the Board over her 25 years including more than 8 years as President. She will continue to be connected to the College, however, in her role as a

member of the Board of Directors of the Taft College Foundation. Thank you, Carolyn, for your outstanding contributions to the College! You will be greatly missed!!

Upcoming Events:

May 23	Taft College Scholarship Luncheon
May 23	2014 Taft College Graduation
May 24	Dental Hygiene Graduation
June 9	Summer Session Starts
June 27	Transition to Independent Living Graduation

Event Details available at: <http://www.taftcollege.edu/calendar/month.php>