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We welcome your comments and/or suggestions for future articles. Please forward inquiries to Robert G. Miller, publisher and editor, via e-mail to: rgmiller1@southwest.tn.edu...or call him in Southwest's Communications and Marketing Department at (901) 333-4368.

Southwest Now Magazine is published semi-annually in the fall/winter and spring/summer.
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We have established one powerful institutional rule at Southwest. It focuses on two important words—**Courtesy** and **Respect**—these must permeate the environment within the College as well as our external environment. We constantly strive to become a leader among community colleges in student support, employee relations, operational effectiveness and service to our communities. Southwest will continue its’ emphasis on student success, enrollment growth, retention and graduation, improved customer service, service to the community, leadership effectiveness, fund raising, workforce development and accountability. We are focusing a more deliberate approach to our adult population through employing an adult recruiter, developing a weekend degree program, offering Early Bird classes, providing adult lounges on both main campuses, configuring degree programs through, Industrial Readiness Training and our Mid-South Quality Productivity Center. We will continue our focus on leadership effectiveness at all levels—President and Senior Staff, Deans, Chairs, Managers and Directors. Leadership effectiveness is critical to achieving our mission of anticipating and responding to the educational needs of students, employers and communities in Memphis, Shelby, Fayette counties and the surrounding Mid-South region, and our vision of becoming a national model for technical, career, and transfer education by fostering student success, transforming lives, and increasing the educational level of a diverse community.

**Retention and Graduation**
Retention and graduation initiatives are critical to our survival and viability and must be accomplished through:

- The collective efforts of the entire College community
- The work of the Office of Retention and Graduation
- Dynamic and engaging classroom instruction
- A strong mentoring program
- Strong academic support
- Beautiful and aesthetically attractive campuses
- Student involvement in campus life

Southwest is establishing a learning community that is deeply focused on student engagement and success. We are embracing:

- A culture of high expectations with personal attention to struggling students
- A college community that creates hope for deserving students
- Innovation and reform in curriculum and instruction across all disciplines
- Innovative and creative explorations to support and enhance student success
- Barrier-free processes to facilitate student success
- Technology utilization to enhance students’ learning experiences
- Instructors serving as learning facilitators rather than dispensers of information
- New and dynamic teaching methods to enhance student learning
- Hands-on learning activities to enhance critical thinking, problem solving, team work and student engagement
We are also embarking on Flipped Classrooms where a traditional method of lecturing and assigned homework is reversed. Consequently, students will:

- Listen and watch lectures via video on their own time outside of class
- Use class time to complete homework, work through problems, collaborate with classmates and the instructor
- Discuss advanced concepts and other more engaging or interactive technology

Student engagement is a significant component of Retention and Graduation and must involve every unit and division within the College. For example:

**Administration** — provides leadership and resources to facilitate student success

**Faculty** — provide innovative and challenging learning opportunities for students through the use of technology, problem solving, critical thinking, skill development, learning applications and team work

** Faculty/Staff** — Provide focused mentoring, establish supportive relationships with students and become advocates providing resource information and guidance that facilitates student success

**Academic Support** — provides services and resources to assist students in successfully achieving their academic and career goals through tutorial support, computer labs and auxiliary materials

**Office of Retention and Graduation** — provides broad-based leadership across the College, assesses student progress and advocates strategies that enhance student success

**IT** — provides responsive technology applications that promote student success in classrooms and laboratories

**Communications/Marketing** — promotes the entire College with a focus on student success

**Campus Security** — provides a safe and secure environment that allows students to study and learn without undue concern for their safety

**Physical Plant** — provides comfortable, clean, attractive classrooms and facilities that contribute to a dynamic learning environment.

**Institute for Educational Innovation**

Innovation is a major thrust for the College. We must be creative, innovative and passionate in order to improve student outcomes. To foster innovation, we are establishing an Institute for Educational Innovation.

- It is an initiative designed to facilitate innovative pilot projects by faculty and staff.
- Grant funds will be utilized to support this institute.
- Innovative project proposals will be judged based on their potential to contribute to positive student, college or community outcomes.

**Industrial Readiness**

Partnerships and collaboratives remain a high priority at Southwest. The College’s Industrial Readiness program continues to impact our community in a positive manner. Currently, we are partnering with eleven (11) organizations by providing Industrial Readiness Training to prospective employees. Three hundred sixty-one students (361) completed the 49-hour course in 2012. Three hundred thirty-four (334) are projected to complete the program during the 2013 academic year which will generate a total of six hundred ninety-five (695) graduates. Five companies have sponsored IRT classes. However, over fifteen (15) companies have offered positions to our students with great results. We are currently working with two (2) new companies—Nike and Smith & Nephew who will require over five hundred (500) IRT graduates in 2014. Twenty-five (25) organizations have agreed to assist Southwest in grant procurement and have committed to consider employment of our graduates who have earned Associate Degrees and/or Technical Certificates.

Individuals who successfully complete the IRT Program are positioned to earn wages that will allow them to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families as well as contribute to the economic growth of our community. Simultaneously, the work force demands of business and industry are being met which will provide stability and growth for their organizations as well as our community.
Southwest Awarded $8.4 Million from U.S. Department of Labor for Workforce Development

Southwest Tennessee Community College will receive more than $8.4 million in U.S. Department of Labor grants to assist training Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) eligible workers, veterans and others in the fields of advanced manufacturing, process control and logistics management. Southwest received a total of three grants—a single grant and two consortia grants. Receipt of these funds will allow Southwest to better respond to the critical needs of Memphis, Shelby and Fayette counties for a trained workforce with industry recognized credentials, certificates and degrees that will contribute to Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam’s Drive to 55 Initiative.

The single Southwest grant entitled Southwest SOLUTIONS will offer approximately 550 TAA-eligible workers, veterans and others the opportunity for training in process controls. Participants will be offered employer connections through Industrial Readiness Training courses and on-the-job and entrepreneurial training opportunities. The $2,661,480 grant will also offer on-line components and data tracking for continuous improvement.

Southwest is also involved in two consortia grants. With Lewis and Clark Community College (Illinois) as the lead grantee, Southwest will partner with nine other community colleges from the Mississippi headwaters to the Gulf to establish transportation, distribution, and logistics sector partnerships in communities along the river; recalibrate programs to align with employer needs; build stacked and latticed credentials and integrate evidence-based strategies to serve TAA-eligible workers and others; and solidify the consortium for long-term collaboration. As a co-grantee, Southwest will receive two million eight hundred fifty-four thousand six hundred and one dollars ($2,854,601).

With Mount Wachusett Community College of Gardner, Mass., as the lead grantee, four community colleges in Louisiana, Massachusetts, Ohio and Tennessee, including Southwest, will serve more than 1,700 TAA-eligible workers, veterans and others. The Advanced Manufacturing, Mechatronics, and Quality Consortium was awarded a total of $15,875,432 to support job seekers in quickly obtaining training and credentials. Participants will be trained in advanced manufacturing, mechatronics and quality leading to stacked and latticed credentials. As a co-grantee, Southwest will receive two million nine hundred ninety-three thousand six hundred and fifteen dollars ($2,993,615).

We are pleased with the College’s progress as we diligently strive to ensure that Southwest is the best choice for students, employers, and our broader community.

Cordially,

Nathan L. Essex
President
Southwest Tennessee Community College
Southwest’s Office of Student Activities and Multicultural Affairs sponsored the Business Etiquette for College Students seminar facilitated by Jacqueline Smith-Haines, of Smith Haines Etiquette and Consulting. The seminar, held on September 25 and 26 at the Macon Cove and Union Avenue campuses respectively, covered the common rules of etiquette and concluded with a fine dining dinner tutorial. Smith-Haines defines etiquette as a set of practices which are followed in a wide variety of situations. Each society has its own distinct etiquette, and various cultures within a society also have their own rules and social norms.

Business etiquette, Smith-Haines indicated, is the accepted conduct one must acknowledge when striving to create strong business relationships. She stressed the skills learned in business etiquette workshops are referred to as “soft skills,” which are related to emotional intelligence such as social graces, friendliness, and communication skills.

She also indicated data supporting the significance of business etiquette for college students has been substantiated by major educational institutions. “Renowned colleges and universities such as DePaul University, Stanford University, California Institute of Technology (Caltech), and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), just to name a few, have recognized the value of etiquette and soft skills training. The universities found that soft skills gained from etiquette training are as important as hard skills or job knowledge,” said Smith-Haines.

College students who possess good social skills increase their chances of successful entry into the job market and attaining their career goals. Possessing interpersonal skills required for corporate survival are a must, she says. “Good manners and being academically astute, gives the college graduate a competitive edge in the workforce and gains favor with corporate executives and clients. During interviews, prospective employers are not only looking for job knowledge, they are also looking for a prospective employee, who fits within the culture of their company,” Smith-Haines stated.

The message she wanted most to impress upon the students was success in today’s business world requires more than an advanced degree:

- It takes less than 15 seconds to make a first impression; therefore a refined and professional presence is a must in today’s business environment.
- Displaying proper social behavior in one’s professional and personal life is vitally important so students should remember, “Your Conduct Counts.”

Southwest hosted a successful showcase of its Solutions group on April 5, which is a part of Workforce Development, Corporate Training and Continuing Education. Over 60 visitors representing over 30 area manufacturing companies attended, along with an assortment of economic development groups and community organizations.

They learned of the burgeoning programs Southwest offers, including its acclaimed Industrial Readiness Training (IRT) program and its Mechatronic program. The IRT program has trained over 450 potential employees for companies such as Electrolux and Solae in mechanical skills, personal skills, and workforce culture.

The Mechatronic program trains incumbent workers in advanced manufacturing maintenance and operations. Both programs are highly specialized to the customer companies, and all of the Solutions programming is being co-developed with Southwest faculty to allow participants to possibly earn Southwest academic credits.

The speakers included U.S. Congressman Steven Cohen and Larry Gibson, Unilever plant manager. Both spoke about the importance of workforce development regionally and for each business in the region. Look for more success coming out of the Southwest Solutions group soon!
Southwest’s SMARTS (Southwest Mentors Advancing Retention, Teamwork, and Success) program continues to gain momentum, in part due to the recommendations of faculty advisors, and also because the students themselves recognize the benefits of the resources and support that mentors bring to the academic experience. According to Dr. Cynthia Calhoun, executive director of Retention and Graduation, the fall 2013 SMARTS Orientation, held on September 13 at the Macon Cove Campus, drew the largest number of mentees since the program began in spring 2011. In all, 46 mentees attended the SMARTS orientation last month compared to 14 mentees participating in the program’s inauguration in spring 2011.

The SMARTS program describes a mentor as a faculty or staff volunteer who is willing to devote individual attention to an assigned student. Moreover, it refers to a mentee as a student who volunteers to partner with a faculty or staff member and agrees to seek and receive coaching and guidance related to possible challenges associated with goal setting and career planning. In all, the SMARTS program owes its success to the integrated efforts of all involved.

There are 22 mentors in the program this fall. So far, the program has tracked 23 mentees who stayed the course and graduated from the College. SMARTS has achieved an 88 percent semester-to-semester retention rate at Southwest for fall 2012 to spring 2013, and for spring 2013 to fall 2013, (the latter based upon preregistration for fall 2013 classes). SMARTS mentees are mostly new students but also include returning students.

Critical to the mentee’s growth is a required shadowing experience with their mentor, another instructor/employee, or a trusted associate outside of the institution in the student’s field of study. At the culmination of the program mentees present a short paper recapping their experience.

The SMARTS Program Sustains its Momentum

Southwest Rolls Out the New MyPrint Initiative

The Information Technology Services Department, in partnership with the Student Government Association, would like to introduce the MyPrint Initiative. The MyPrint Initiative provides students with $35 worth of free printing credits at the beginning of each semester. The credits are equal to at least 700 prints in black & white. Each student will receive this credit each semester. Once a student has used their printing credits, they can purchase more at any MyPrint Pay station to purchase more printing credits. MyPrint stations are located in the Libraries on each campus.

In previous semesters, Southwest has provided unrestricted printing in the Libraries, Academic Support Centers, and public (student) labs. Printing volume and costs have increased considerably over the past few years and projections show the upward trend to continue. The MyPrint Initiative will decrease waiting time for print job processing, reduce print jams and alleviate abandoned and wasted print jobs.

MyPrint Initiative Features Include:

- Students will receive an allotment of $35.00 in print credits each semester.
- Print credits will be allotted to student accounts three weeks before the semester starts.
- The allotment is equivalent to 700 black and white individual prints.
- Students will have the ability to add print credits to their account by visiting the MyPrint Pay Stations located in each Library.
- Each additional print credit over the 700 print allotment is 5¢ per side for black and white; 10¢ for color.
- Students will have print access to all network printers in the Academic Support Center (ASC) and Libraries.

For additional information, please see the Getting Started Guide on the MyPrint Initiative Website. For questions, please contact the Information Technology Services Help Desk at 901-333-4357.

Students can view the MyPrint website at http://www.southwest.tn.edu/myprint/.
IRT Job Fair Draws Big Name Manufacturers

The word is out. Southwest’s Industrial Readiness Training (IRT) program’s “Gold Certification” carries a lot of clout in the job market, especially manufacturing. So when IRT held its 2013 Fall IRT Job Fair on October 1 at the Macon Cove Campus, both potential employers and IRT graduates made the date. Recruiters for major companies offering substantial employment opportunities were at the tables peddling their wares while looking over the crop of IRT graduates who have proven they have the right credentials to get the job done.

“We are looking for manufacturing-skilled laborers to work in our manufacturing plant where we manufacture semi-hollow-body guitars. What’s really important for us is to have someone to come in with somewhat of a stable work history. Even if they’re not employed, that’s okay, if they’ve worked somewhere and contributed,” said Edna Parish, HR manager for Gibson Brands, Inc., formerly Gibson Guitars.

Other big names like Adecco, Kruger Products (KLG), DuPont/Solae, Manpower, Medical Action, Mitsubishi, MLG&W, Nike, Nucor Steel, Sharp, Smith & Nephew and Sonoco were present. Representatives from the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) and Tennessee College of Applied Technologies (TCAT) were also on hand to answer questions about their respective organizations.

As many as 600 people have matriculated through the IRT program since it started in January 2012, and a large number of them showed up for this invitation-only event. Some were recent graduates seeking employment. Some already had jobs and were looking for an opportunity to move up. One graduate stated, “I have gone through the IRT program and I am a gold certified member. I am currently working, but I am still looking.”

“We invited everyone, all 600-plus graduates to come. We had RSVPs from 166 [graduates]. We wanted everybody to know about this event, so when we do it again, we’ll have a bigger attendance because they’ll already know what an IRT Job Fair looks like,” said Barnett.
Southwest Takes on the Training Piece for Memphis’ Intermodal Expansion

Trains, boats, and planes; and let’s not forget trucks – Memphis, one of the nation’s major logistics hubs, is expanding its arsenal to include a $3.6 million investment in a 30-acre property that houses a 10,800 square-foot maintenance shop for intermodal container and truck storage. The Economic Development Growth Engine (EDGE) for Memphis and Shelby County announced recently it arbitrated a deal with the Marine Repair Services and Container Maintenance Corporation (MRS-CMC) for the purchase of the property owned and developed by Carolyn Hardy, CEO of Chism Hardy Investments. CMC expanded its Memphis holdings from 10 to 30 acres and will employ as many as 84 additional workers in the next several years. To help seal the deal, Hardy pulled in Southwest’s Industrial Readiness Training (IRT) program.

The IRT program was developed in partnership with the local Workforce Investment Network (WIN), business, industry, and government leaders, to provide relevant skills training, both soft and technical. The vision of the program is to develop a highly skilled manufacturing and industrial maintenance workforce to meet immediate employer requirements, and to attract new industry to the Memphis area. The target population comprises primarily unemployed and underemployed Memphians.

Southwest developed a 40-contact hour Intermodal Maintenance Training curriculum, offering 4.0 continuing education units. The course was designed to prepare students to be effective intermodal-container and chassis-maintenance mechanics. It focuses on maintenance, repair, troubleshooting, and making manual adjustments to chassis trailers and drive box containers.

“This new adventure is putting Memphians back in the workplace, giving these people a future. This is training for a lifetime. The program is free for the students and, as an added bonus, the students get a taste of the future benefits college classes can offer. Where can you get a company to not only pay for your education, but provide you with skills for a lifetime and a job? What a novel idea, creating a vehicle to put people back to work. The economy gets a shot in the arm,” said Southwest Welding Instructor Danny Spencer.

Fifteen candidates successfully completed the Intermodal Maintenance Training program on September 20. The graduates, as part of the program, will receive interviews with CMC and have a strong possibility of obtaining work with the company, earning a livable wage as maintenance mechanics.

Headquartered in South Carolina, CMC provides depot services, equipment sales, maintenance, and repair. It operates both marine and rail terminals. “Our new yard and repair shop positions us to be competitive in one of the fastest growing logistics hubs in the U.S. We will continue our focus on customer service through expansion with skilled labor and training. This new depot begins a very exciting chapter for our customers and team,” said Vince Marino, CEO of the Marino Group, in a statement to the Memphis Business Journal.
Adrianne Jenkins, president of Southwest’s Student Government Association (SGA), was among the students selected to be a part of the “Students Connect with Mayor Wharton” think tank at city hall on September 19. Memphis Mayor A C Wharton Jr. invited students from colleges and universities in the Memphis area to get their input on issues that affect the growth of the city.

The mayor asked the students why it is important to complete their college education. For Jenkins, paving the way for her sons was crucial. She responded, “College is important to me because, at this point in my life, I am a product of Clementine Apartments, known as the projects. People seem to stereotype me as an unsuccessful individual because of my address. I have two African-American sons who are growing up in this negative environment.”

“Children usually do what is set before their eyes. It’s already hard enough on African-American men. It would be a great accomplishment for a single African-American mother of two, who has no income, to achieve and be successful. I would feel so good about myself, and my sons would be proud as well. It’s important that I complete college so that I may portray a positive image to my family and others,” said Jenkins.

The mayor also asked the students what it would take to make them stay in Memphis after graduation. Like most graduates, a good paying job tops Jenkins’ list.

She indicated another concern of the mayor was “what we, as students, would like to see happen in Memphis.” Ranging mostly in age from 18-25, the students said they wanted more to do during their spare time. “Students also wanted to do more networking and advertising so that we can have more student involvement at college events within the Memphis area,” said Jenkins.

To sum up her experience, Jenkins said, “I Choose 901… which means choosing the City of Memphis (the area code for Memphis is 901). Mayor Wharton stated that our opinions as students do count. The mayor also assured us that our voices would be heard. On behalf of the student body here at Southwest, thanks for allowing us the opportunity to represent the President of Southwest Tennessee Community College, Dr. Nathan Essex and ourselves as well.”

Jenkins’ majors are paramedics and a university parallel degree with emphasis in allied health sciences. The other students attending the event were: SGA Sergeant-at-Arms Glasgow Rex, Southwest Source Treasurer Mia Atkins-Beason, and Secretary Kurt Fritjofson.
Southwest announced September 18 it had been notified it would be the recipient of more than $8.4 million in U.S. Department of Labor grants to help train Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) eligible workers, veterans and others in the fields of advanced manufacturing, process control and logistics management. The grants are part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grant program, a multiyear, nearly $2 billion initiative to expand targeted training programs for unemployed workers. Southwest received a total of three grants, which included a single grant and two consortia grants. “Receiving these funds will allow Southwest to better respond to the great needs of Memphis, Shelby and Fayette counties for a trained workforce with industry recognized credentials, certificates and degrees that will contribute to Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam’s Drive to 55 Initiative,” said Karen Nippert, vice president for Institutional Advancement.

The single Southwest grant entitled Southwest SOLUTIONS will offer approximately 550 TAA-eligible workers, veterans and others the opportunity for training in process controls. Participants will be offered employer connections through Industrial Readiness Training courses and be offered on-the-job and entrepreneurial training opportunities. The $2,661,480 grant will also offer on-line components and data tracking for continuous improvement.

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With Mount Wachusett Community College of Gardner, Mass., as the lead grantee, four community colleges in Louisiana, Massachusetts, Ohio and Tennessee, including Southwest, will serve more than 1,700 TAA-eligible workers, veterans and others. The Advanced Manufacturing, Mechatronics, and Quality Consortium was awarded a total of $15,875,432 to help job seekers quickly obtain training and credentials. Participants will be trained in advanced manufacturing, mechatronics and quality leading to stacked and latticed credentials. As a co-grantee, Southwest will receive $2,906,345.

Southwest’s Industrial Readiness Training Class
Southwest Gets $1.5 Million-Plus Boost for its Mechatronics Program

Putting some bite into his Drive to 55 Initiative, Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam came to Memphis on September 16 to announce a $1,550,090 grant allocation to Southwest for its mechatronics program and slightly over $1,213,000 to the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) - Memphis to further develop its Avionics and Aircraft Maintenance and Advanced Manufacturing programs.

Below are reactions from Southwest’s Executive Director of Workforce Development John Churchill and Dean of Career Studies/Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences Mike Stephens.

“We have received a lot of attention and credibility [from] the [Industrial Readiness Training] IRT program. This has created interest in Southwest’s ability to produce quality technical classes, both non-credit and degree programs. Because of a lack of equipment and space, we were about to be overwhelmed with requests for technical training. Space issues can be resolved in the short term, by moving classes and equipment as necessary. Equipment was our big concern as we have many clients spread across a large service area. This equipment will allow us to better serve the local workforce and industry because it will give us the ability to provide quality training when and where it is needed,” said Churchill.

“The $1.5 million Governor’s Competitive Grant for Workforce Development provides Southwest with the resources needed to train the projected 2,000-3,000 employees needed by Memphis manufacturing companies in the next two years, with the demand for these skills remaining strong into the future. The grant funds will be used to purchase equipment that will provide Southwest students with technical skills that are acquired through the hands-on exposure to equipment found in local manufacturing companies,” said Stephens.

“A portion of the funds will be used to purchase additional equipment for our new Advanced Integrated Industrial Technology program, designed to train skilled-maintenance technicians. These skills are in high demand and are needed to maintain the highly-automated manufacturing equipment used in local manufacturing. Funds will also be used to purchase equipment that will allow us to train Process Control Technicians. These technicians are also in high demand in the chemical, food, beverage, and in many other local industries,” Stephens stated.

Southwest President Nathan Essex indicated this funding will enable the college to expand its Industrial Readiness Training Program and meet the growing needs of business and industry while simultaneously creating employment opportunities for deserving citizens.

Gov. Bill Haslam (left) presents President Nathan Essex (right) with a $2,774,488 check for Southwest and TCAT - Memphis to purchase equipment and provide technical training for the Mid-South workforce.
At the beginning of the 2013 fall semester, students in Southwest’s Introduction to Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) courses walked into a classroom equipped with new Samsung Chromebooks, each loaded with instructional software that includes video lectures, interactive tutorials, practice exercises, pretests and post-tests, etc. The computers are the platform for Intro to A&P’s new modular-based format that Associate Professor Ken Carpenter designed in collaboration with the Pearson Publishing Company.

“Southwest is leading the state of Tennessee with their Introduction to A&P students. No one else is using a modular-based format, and in an Emporium Model for their Intro students!” stated Melissa Fischer, publisher’s representative for Pearson Higher Education. “The Emporium Model replaces [conventional] lectures with a learning resource center model featuring interactive computer software and on-demand personalized assistance.”

Southwest President Nathan Essex is very optimistic. “I think that this is a wonderful approach for students. This is really cutting-edge technology. Anatomy and Physiology are very challenging courses and this will facilitate their success. Based on this program, they can work at their own pace and have persons monitoring to assist where needed. I applaud Ken for his wisdom and vision in promoting this program, in developing this modular-based format,” said Essex during a recent classroom visit.

A&P is the keystone for allied health and nursing programs. Admittance into these programs is a competitive process and students must maintain high performance standards to succeed. Carpenter explained, “Students come to our school, some of them right out of high school, some of them have been away for a while. They’re asked to take the upper division A&P course and make an A or B. I say an A or B because that is what is required now to get into our nursing and allied health programs. Some don’t have the background, and you need a strong biological science background to get through this course.”

“In May of this year, I attended the Human Anatomy and Physiology National Convention. One of the biggest topics discussed in the sessions was how to prepare students to successfully pass A&P courses. The trend all of us see is that students are not as prepared as they have been in the past,” Carpenter further stated.

To champion students’ chances for success, Carpenter identified topics that were important to passing the upper-level A&P courses in his design of the Intro to A&P modular-based format. Students can now take the modular-based format concurrent with other learning support classes (math, writing, and reading).

Department Head of Natural Sciences Juliann Waits noted, “We have a percentage of students who could do well in the upper-level courses, if they have completed their learning support classes; math, reading and writing. We want to give those students an opportunity to take Introductory A&P classes to help them be successful so that when they get in the upper-level courses, they score well, so they’re competitive.”

A bonus feature is that once students complete a module, they can advance on to the next level.

Carpenter (standing left) and a lab assistant (standing back right) acclimate students to the new Samsung Chromebooks for use in the new modular-based format.
Southwest’s Family and Friends Day Inaugural Review

“The first Family and Friends Day event was full of excitement, collaboration, and cooperation from the campus community as a whole. It was a great day. We saw people connecting with students, faculty, staff, family, and friends.” —Vanessa Dowdy

As many as 1,200 people turned out to celebrate Southwest’s inaugural Family and Friends Day held on September 7 at the Macon Cove Campus. Spearheaded by the Director of Recruitment Vanessa Dowdy, with assistance from Southwest’s faculty, staff and students, the event was a gigantic hit with fun and games, such as electronic basketball, football toss, the 24-inch slide, the big-foot race, bingo, and more. There was something for everyone; even giant coloring books, tattoos, a bouncy for children, and food and prizes.

Chef Harrell Martin, the manager of Southwest’s new cafeteria, “The Taste,” fired up the grill. The crowd enjoyed hamburgers, hot dogs, snow cones, popcorn, nachos with cheese and cotton candy. Giveaways and prizes included an autographed game ball and T-shirts from the Memphis Grizzlies and donations from Follett Bookstore and Kingdom Ministries. The Southwest Women’s Softball team gave away two tickets to their Softball Classic that was held on September 14.

Attendees visited the 30 exhibitions featuring interactive displays by Southwest faculty and outside vendors including: Girls, Inc., the Mid-South Better Business Bureau, Seedco, Memphis Bioworks Foundation, Mary Kay, and the Networking Roundtable Career Transition Group. The Follett Bookstore was also open for this special event.

According to Dowdy, the purpose of Southwest’s Family and Friends Day was two-fold; it celebrated first-time enrollment students and served as a magnet to attract new students to the college. “The event gave parents and extended family members of our current students, faculty and staff an opportunity to engage in activities, and to fellowship with one another. Participants were given an opportunity to learn more about Southwest through exciting exhibits, presentations, music by our students and alumni, and tours of the Macon Cove Campus,” said Dowdy.

The electronic basketball and other inflatable games were among the crowd’s favorites at Southwest’s Family and Friends Day celebration.
**TSBDC at Southwest Hosts Veteran Start-Up Business Workshop**

The Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC) at Southwest hosted more than 40 veterans on July 24 interested in starting a business. This free workshop for veterans covered topics including choosing your business structure, tax requirements, business licenses, planning and financing options.

“We appreciate the great service of our veterans and really want to assist them. Some veterans have faced challenges in securing employment, but an alternative we wanted to present them was entrepreneurship,” said Rory Thomas, Executive Director of TSBDC.

Nine percent of small businesses are veteran-owned. These 2.45 million veteran-owned businesses employ more than 5 million individuals. Veterans who decided entrepreneurship is right for them after attending the workshop will begin receiving free one-on-one counseling from a TSBDC small business specialist.

![Veterans received vital information on entrepreneurial processes and practices during the Business Start-up workshop.](image)

![Tyler Moore, senior small business specialist for TSBDC, discusses business start-up strategies with veterans.](image)

**Associate Professor’s Family Donates a House to Sickle Cell Foundation**

The Sickle Cell Foundation of Tennessee held the grand opening last summer of The Carpenter House (TCH). The family of Southwest’s Associate Professor of Natural Sciences Kenneth Carpenter and wife Terrell, family nurse practitioner at Memphis Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, donated the house to help provide quality and affordable housing for adult-males living with the Sickle Cell Disease. Carpenter is also the founder of the Annual Sickle Cell 5k Run/Walk.

“When it comes to funding and media attention, sickle cell disease often goes under the radar. As donors, it is our intent to improve the quality of life for these individuals. We hope that visibility of The Carpenter House will improve and increase community outreach and awareness of the importance of sickle cell disease,” said Kenneth Carpenter.

President/CEO of the Sickle Cell Foundation Trevor K. Thompson describes TCH as a 3,000 sq. foot, remodeled home bolstering the character and amenities of a modern design. Features include six bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, living room/dining room, family room, library/media room, office, kitchen, quiet nook, laundry room, refrigerator, stove, washer/dryer, bed linens, full perimeter security system and a code operated lock on the front door.

The house, Thompson told The Commercial Appeal, was renovated with donations from area churches and residents, a grant from Home Depot and about $50,000 that the Sickle Cell Foundation of Tennessee made by selling another property it had.

![Associate Professor’s Family Donates a House to Sickle Cell Foundation](image)

(left to right) are Sickle Cell Foundation of TN Board Members Derek Renfroe Esq., Board Chair Phil Brown, Dr. William Terrell Jr., Dr. Patricia Adams-Graves, Terrell Carpenter, Andre Carpenter, Amber Carpenter, Kenneth Carpenter, Cherry Whitehead-Thompson, and Trevor K. Thompson.
Computer Engineering Technology major Leon Baker is what Southwest classifies as an adult-student learner. Baker is a husband, the father of three lovely daughters, and a native of St. Angelo, Texas. CalTech, an IT company that primary provides services for banking institutions, hired Baker last summer after earning his A.A.S. degree this past May. The company, based in his home state, Texas, offered him a lucrative salary and an excellent benefit package.

The University of Mississippi, one of Mississippi’s most prestigious educational institutions, awarded Baker a track scholarship in 1996. Education was secondary to him at that time and in his words, “I used to party all the time. When I partied out, I moved to Memphis and started to have a bit more fun. And then it got time for me to get serious, so I enrolled.”

Southwest was the best option for him. He’d seen commercials, had friends that went to Southwest who’d had good experiences, but the affordable tuition sealed the deal. “It was definitely affordable. I came in and took a little visit. I liked what I saw, so I enrolled,” said Baker. He attended a 7:30 a.m. class after finishing his shift as a team leader at the hub in FedEx’s International Import Division.

Southwest’s smaller class sizes is one of the features that made Baker’s matriculation rewarding. “The experience in the classroom was second to none, I’d have to say, after going to Ole Miss and experiencing the giant classrooms and the instructors not really being able to engage with their students. The instructors here were great. They engaged with their students, getting the maximum learning ability they could get out of them. ... I felt challenged here and I also felt I was learning something,” Baker stated.

Southwest Pride

Compiled in 2013-2014

- 97 percent of 2012-2013 Southwest Tennessee Community College graduates are employed.
- Nursing students’ National Council Licensure Exam 100 percent pass rate for 2012, 2010 and 2009
- Southwest has been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.
- Innovative Industrial Readiness Training (IRT) program has trained hundreds of unemployed and/or underemployed participants, and assisted them in acquiring employment with several major manufacturers. It has received national recognition and provides state-wide leadership in industrial training.
- State-of-the-art facilities with 21st century technologies
- Received re-accreditation of several programs: Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT); Phlebotomy (PLT); Emergency Medical Technician (EMT); and the Pharmacy Technician Program received the initial accreditation
- Awarded nearly $10 million in federal and state workforce-development grants in 2013
- Southwest recognized on the list of 80 EMT programs with high ROI/ highest degree value in the nation
- Southwest named to the 2013-2014 list of The Best Online Early Childhood Education Degree Programs
- Received an “A” on the American School Search Safety Report, indicating the college experiences no significant crime problems
- Recipient of numerous international, national and regional competitive awards for communications and marketing excellence
- Many Southwest alumni are successful leaders-- (Dr. Randy McPherson, National School Counselor of the Year; Linda Chism, Director of Training and Development at the MED; Gordon Lintz, President and CAO of Morristown-Hamblen Healthcare System; Alfred Chung, VP of Operations Grace Medical; and Dorsey Hopson, Superintendent of Shelby County Schools).

Leon Baker

Compiled in 2013-2014
The old adage “Driven to Succeed” could well serve as a motto for new leadership in the Student Services and Enrollment Management Division at Southwest.

Under the now, year-long tenure of Dr. Dwayne J. Scott, Southwest’s new Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management, higher student enrollment and retention are twin imperatives for his vision of excellence. Scott is a student affairs professional with more than 22 years of higher education experience mainly in Arkansas and Tennessee. He’s a Louisiana native who earned his undergraduate degree in Radio/Television and Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership degree from Arkansas State University.

Prior to joining Southwest Tennessee Community College in December 2012, Dr. Scott served as Vice President for Student Affairs at Mid-South Community College in West Memphis, AR. He was known as a dedicated student advocate committed to advising and counseling individuals and student groups; where he evaluated, restructured and managed the implementation of tutorial services.

During my recent interview with Dr. Scott, we explored several crucial and timely topics on Student Retention, Events and Activities, and Enrollment. Excerpts below from his comments are revealing about his vision for raising the bar of excellence at Southwest for greater student success.

**Student Retention**

One of the things we feel will help us be successful is going to a model in our advising and counseling center where we will do forward-thinking/proactive advising with our students. This means not only we will talk with them about their career paths, but meeting with them about other issues that impact the classroom and their retention here. The goal is really to create a connection with the student where he/she can have a contact on campus to discuss any academic or non-academic issue. We have targeted high-risk students taking six or more hours of developmental coursework and ultimately helping retain them. Now, we will advise them for at least two semesters and follow up with them often to determine if they have any issues affecting their attendance, and encourage them to attend class regularly. This is a major effort for us. Also, we will encourage students to get advised early on their future courses and then register early to get the best classes for them.

**Events and Activities**

A major initiative in the division has been launched where all directors and coordinators will engage in student assessment activities and professional development. As a result of different events and activities at Southwest, we’ll learn how to identify what student outcomes we’d like them to receive from their participation. This fiscal year, we will examine how the assorted events and activities impact classroom success. We plan to collaborate with faculty in selecting speakers to visit the college and enable the students to have strong learning outcomes from these experiences in partnership with faculty input. As a possibility, maybe an instructor will assign students to write papers on the topics they’ve heard discussed by visiting speakers. This is solely one example and we’re sure there will be other examples as well.

**Enrollment**

It’s certainly evident that strong enrollment is the lifeblood of the college. In view of that, we must do a better job of identifying the populations we serve such as traditional and non-traditional/adult students with a greater focus on student success encouraging a commitment to lifelong learning. We have to better address the needs of our diverse students…what they’re looking for and ensuring students can see education as a feasible possibility that they can afford, and is of value to them. We will work very hard and efficiently in trying to retain our students whom we serve at this community college. Historically at Southwest, many students have come, but we haven’t fared as well in retaining most of them. One effective tool we now have is mandatory advising before you register. In the end, this will help us all because the key challenge is better serving the needs of our students both academically and socially. In the end, this will lead to significant improvement in retention.
Criminal Justice Camp Expands Opportunities for Area High School Students

Southwest Tennessee Community College is playing a key role in the future of Shelby County. By creating opportunities for our citizens to participate in activities that were previously not available, we empower our community to excel. Southwest’s new Criminal Justice Camp is an excellent example of this.

This camp, that debuted this past summer, was hosted by Southwest’s Criminal Justice Club. The camp was designed for middle school (sixth – eighth grade) and high school students (ninth-twelfth grade.)

When planning for the camp, organizers focused on hosting various academic activities that promote critical thinking, application, and problem-solving. Being allowed to take part in activities like a mock trial at the University of Memphis Law School, as well as being able to interact with criminal justice personnel, taught the participants about many aspects of the Criminal Justice System. Participants met with fingerprinting experts who spoke with them about the process of fingerprinting. They then were allowed to take fingerprinting samples on their own. These and other hands-on activities gave the student participants inside knowledge of law-enforcement, the courts and corrections.

Additionally, the Criminal Justice Club partnered with the Memphis Police Department (MPD) to learn the art of forensic science. Activities with the Memphis Police included investigating mock crime scenes, examining fingerprints, tracing ballistics, and examining blood splatter. The camp was led by Patricia Nunally, adjunct instructor, Joanitha Barnes, instructor, and Dr. Aimee Burgdorf, adjunct instructor of the Criminal Justice Studies Program.

Recently I spoke with Patricia Nunally, who is head of the Criminal Justice Club, to ask about the outcome of the initial Criminal Justice Camp sessions and her future expectations for the camps.

I know many people were interested in the Criminal Justice Camp you rolled out this past summer. What kind of audience are you looking for when you think of the participants in your camp?

For the upcoming summer, I am looking for students (grades six-twelve) who are interested in careers in Criminal Justice. I am looking for a diverse group of young people to make up two different camps. Hopefully, we will have 25 middle school students in June and 25 high school students in July.

How did this past summer go?

I was delayed in starting the previous September because of funding and time restraints.

What was a regular day of camp like?

A regular day started at 8 a.m., when the parents dropped the students off. We started with breakfast in the cafeteria, (breakfast and lunch were supplied by Memphis City Schools (MCS) Nutrition Services.) From 8:30 a.m. - noon, the students engaged in instructional time, which was led by myself or by the MPD. Lunch was from noon - 12:45 p.m. From 1:3 p.m., we saw guest presenters, went on field trips or to the
University of Memphis Law School. The day ended with campus life/free time (3-4 p.m.) in the gym or game room.

After the first go-through, are you making any changes for this year’s camp?
For this year’s camp, I would like for the high school students to stay overnight to get the full experience of campus life. I’ve been looking into having the students stay at a hotel next to Southwest or on the U of M campus. That way we could do evening activities as well. In addition, we would keep the open registration policy, but I am going to ask the participants to write a personal statement to get to know the participants in advance. In addition, I would make sure that there was no construction going on at the time of camp.

What is the ultimate goal for the Criminal Justice Camp?
The ultimate goals for the Criminal Justice Camp are to expose students to the various occupational fields in the Criminal Justice System, to provide a community service to the youth, to keep juveniles engaged during the summer, to increase the retention rate of our students, and hopefully recruit future Southwest students.

What kind of support are you getting from the community?
I hope to tie the Criminal Justice Camp to my proposed Criminal Justice After School Program. My goal is to start January 2014. The after school program has the support of the City of Memphis, MPD, and the FBI Advisory Board. I hope to get the support of the Criminal Justice Program at Southwest. The after school program is a continuation of activities engaged in during the summer. It is scheduled to open in four schools this January. The participants will meet Monday-Thursday and every other Saturday. On Saturdays - all four of the groups will meet together for discussion and activities.

What are the costs for participants?
The camp fee is currently $150 per week which includes a T-shirt, lunch and academic supplies. We have a limited number of scholarships available.

How can interested participants find out more information about any upcoming Criminal Justice Camps?
If a young person is interested in attending one of our camps, they, or their parents may contact me, Patricia Nunally, at (901) 292-7692, or e-mail us at cjclub@southwest.tn.edu for additional information.

Here’s a Pathway to a Successful Career
Enroll in Southwest’s Adult Weekend Degree Programs
Let us design a financial package that’s right for you!

We Want You as a Southwest Student!
The cost is only around $1,820 per semester—about half the cost of your average state university (2013-2014 school year).

Southwest’s Adult Weekend Degree programs make attaining an Associate degree more accessible for working adults through our 18-month timetable. Make a successful entry into the job market in one of the following disciplines:

- Accountancy
- Business and Commerce, Logistics/Transportation
- Information Technology
- Office Technology
- Teaching
- Tennessee Transfer Pathway
  - Criminal Justice Emphasis
- Tennessee Transfer Pathway
  - Economic Emphasis
- University Parallel
- Online, hybrid, traditional and flex term classes are available

Attend classes on Friday evenings, Saturday mornings and afternoons.
Call (901) 333-6005 for more information.
New Union Avenue Campus Construction Well Underway

Construction is well underway at our new Nursing, Natural Sciences and Biotechnology Building on the Union Avenue Campus. The facility is targeted for completion in the summer of 2014. Assorted construction scenes and a building rendering are shown.

A rendering of the Nursing, Natural Sciences and Biotechnology Building
Southwest’s Early Childhood Education Program Makes “Best Online College Programs” 2013-2014 List

After months of research, BestOnlineColleges.org has released their annual lists for the best online colleges in various fields of study. Program fields include: Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Human Resources, Sociology, Math, Biology, Graphic Design and Nutrition. [Southwest was featured its Early Childhood Education Program.]

BestOnlineColleges.org, a leading resource for online education, has released their lists recognizing the best online programs. Data and surveys from programs across the nation was compiled and analyzed over the course of the 2012-2013 academic year. BestOnlineColleges.org is the premier website for those looking for the best programs and the best schools. Its aim is to aid students and families in making informed decisions when picking a college or university. By collecting months and months of data and research, they’ve compiled lists of the very best programs. For more information visit http://bestonlinecolleges.org/.

Southwest Receives Recognition for High ROI for EMT Degree Programs

FireScience.org (Fire Science Online) has released its list of the 80 EMT Degree Programs with High ROI (Return on Investment) ranking Southwest Tennessee Community College among the very best schools for return on investment. Graduates from these affordable colleges and universities who become EMTs can expect annual incomes at least three times the cost of one year of school. With the cost of college a concern for many students and their families, it is important for students to find a school that produces successful, well-paid graduates. Therefore, it is equally important to recognize the colleges and universities that offer EMT programs that are both high-quality and affordable.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) is projected to grow by 33 percent between 2010 and 2020. This unprecedented growth rate – more than double the average growth rate for all occupations – is a result of post-secondary EMT programs increasing in both quality and quantity.

Adult Weekend Degree Programs Support Governor Haslam’s “Drive to 55”

Southwest has developed Adult Weekend Degree programs which support Governor Bill Haslam’s initiative, “Drive to 55,” to increase the number of Tennessee residents with two-year degrees and above to 55 percent by 2025. Working in conjunction with the “Drive to 55” initiative, which will provide grants based on income and family size, Southwest’s Adult Weekend Degree programs make attaining a two-year degree more accessible for working adults through an 18-month acquisition.

Logistics/Transportation Management career opportunities abound in the trucking, railroad, intermodal and air freight industries. Graduates can manage, plan, direct and coordinate transportation services for companies involved with domestic and international transportation, warehousing, purchasing and materials control.

Also, graduates can prepare to make a successful entry into the job market by earning two-year degrees in only 18 months in the following disciplines:

- Accountancy
- Business and Commerce, Logistics/Transportation
- Office Technology
- Information Technology
- Tennessee Transfer Pathway (Criminal Justice Emphasis, Economic Emphasis)
- Teaching
- University Parallel

Students attend classes on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings and afternoons. All classes are taught at the Maxine A. Smith Center and on the Macon Cove Campus.

For more information call (901) 333-6005.
Southwest Makes Top Female College List

*The College Database* has released its list of the Top 30 Colleges and Universities for Women. Southwest ranks number 21 on the list, with a reported 60 percent of the student body a member of the fairer sex.

“A very well-deserved ‘Congratulations’ to Southwest Tennessee Community College. And a huge thank you for being a fantastic educational option for thousands of students,” wrote Rory O’Brien, managing director of Communication and Partnerships for *The College Database*, in a congratulatory announcement to the college.

Colleges and universities included on this list continue to attract and support a larger percentage of female students than most other colleges.

Women now outnumber men on college campuses, making up an estimated 56 percent of post-secondary students in 2012. In addition, an estimated 60 women’s colleges across 24 states remain active and accredited. However, a number of non-specialized institutions seem to stand out as particularly popular with female students, reports *The College Database*.

New Advanced Integrated Industrial Technology Program Debuts

Southwest has introduced a new academic program, “Advanced Integrated Industrial Technology,” consisting of a two-year associate degree and a one-year technical certificate. In light of the Mid-South’s recent industrialized growth, the program is designed primarily to train maintenance technicians in the fields of manufacturing, industrial process control, distribution, warehousing, and transportation. Several local companies have already expressed a strong interest in the new program.

Optionally, students can request a prior learning assessment of their college-level coursework and industrial experience. This can reduce the number of courses that students are required to take for the associate degree or technical certificate.

The program utilizes state-of-the-art online Amatrol® e-Learning training along with hands-on training with industrial-grade laboratory equipment. Student learning outcomes were specifically designed to satisfy the needs of local industries. Students will gain skills in areas such as pneumatics, hydraulics, piping, mechanical drive components, electrical machinery, power distribution, instrumentation, industrial process control, quality control, statistical process control, preventive maintenance, and programmable logic controllers utilizing PLCs from Allen-Bradley® and Siemens®.

Special emphasis is always placed on workplace safety and industry best-practices. Students pursuing the two-year associate degree will take 60 credit hours of coursework. Technical certificate students will take 19 credit hours of coursework. All of the coursework in the technical certificate program is also part of the associate degree program.

Contact Garry Spencer at (901) 333-4150 for more information about the new “Advanced Integrated Industrial Technology” program.

SMARTS Holds 2013 Spring Finale

SMARTS (Southwest Mentors Advancing Retention, Teamwork, and Success), a faculty-staff mentoring program continues to provide reciprocal satisfaction and benefits for participants. The SMARTS 2013 Spring Finale was held on the Union Avenue Campus last spring during which time mentors and mentees express how the program impacted their individual lives and each other. The finale culminated with the presentation of certificates and mementos (to first time mentors).
Showing their support to meeting the growing workforce needs of our community, FedEx is a supporting contributor toward the College’s new Workforce Development Facility.

Vice President for Institutional Advancement Karen Nippert said, “FedEx is always there supporting our community, and this project is truly a community effort. This building when completed will enable more individuals in the Mid-South to learn critical manufacturing and industrial job skills.”

A Workforce Investment Analysis has shown more than 4,000 advanced manufacturing jobs coming to Memphis through 2018. Furthermore, more than 40 percent of the workforce is expected to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. The Industrial Readiness Training (IRT) program and associated technical programs provide the local workforce the necessary training to meet growing manufacturing demands and to be technologically competitive.

Thus far more than 561 individuals have completed the IRT program and more than 65 percent were immediately hired, and the others are actively involved in a hiring process with a company offering a livable wage. Prior to the class the majority of the students would not be considered by companies who offer positions that pay a livable wage.

The College will design and build a 12,000 to 15,000 square foot, two-story facility conveniently located on the Macon Cove Campus. The facility will be used to expand and improve our Industrial Readiness Training (IRT) program and other related technical programs.

We are very close to meeting our $750,000 matching challenge grant made by the Plough Foundation. Your gift can make the difference. If you are interested in donating to this project, please contact Rose Landey at 901-333-4997, or go to www.southwest.tn.edu and click on Give to Southwest, Make a Gift Now. Naming opportunities are available.
Russell Voeller

1. Why did you choose Southwest? I chose Southwest because of the small class sizes, and the location from my house.

2. What was your major and when did you graduate? My major was Associate of Applied Science in Information Technology, and I graduated, May of this year.

3. Where has your education taken you so far? I designed my own website, and I go and help people with their computer issues.

4. What are you currently doing and what do you hope to be doing five years from now? I go and fix computers for different people, and go to some businesses to help them with their computer issues.

5. What do you think is the best thing you received from your time at Southwest? First there were the teachers. All of them helped me reach my goals, and I learned valuable skills in my Information Tech Career. I am very thankful to all the teachers. I learned how to build a website, and other valuable skills from the future.

6. If you could share anything with today’s students, what would it be? Work or study hard, do not miss class, and listen to your teachers. I picked the best College in the World. I would not trade it for anything, and DO NOT GIVE UP!!!!

7. What’s your favorite thing about our Community? The location of where the College is and the teachers.

8. What’s the one thing you would change about our Community? Have two introduction classes about computers. If I came and taught a class at Southwest, I would have a basic Intro to Computers for adults and young adults. This would allow parents and children to be in the same class together. That is what I do now. I teach adults the basic information about Computing.

9. Who was your Favorite instructor at Southwest and do you have a message for him/her? Yes, I have three favorite teachers: Mrs. Dagny Wright, Dr. Morris and Todd Blankenbeckler. Dagny Wright is the best Information Tech teacher for classes like Cisco and Network Security. Second is Todd Blankenbeckler, because he makes it fun to build websites. Last is Dr. Morris, I learned everything about computers from him. All three of these teachers need to stay at Southwest to help the future young adults that are entering College.

10. What are you proud of? First, that I graduated. Second that it took five times for me to pass Developmental Math, but I did it.

Felecia Hankins

1. Why did you choose Southwest? I chose Southwest when I was 25 years old. I graduated high school in 1999, but decided I wasn’t ready to go to college. My best friend had enrolled at Southwest and she encouraged me to get back into school. I’m so grateful to her for pushing me.

2. What was your major and when did you graduate? My major was Medical Office Administration, and I graduated in May 2010. When I enrolled in 2006, I had to take some developmental classes, but I didn’t let that discourage me. It took me a little longer to finish, but it was worth it.

3. Where has your education taken you so far? In May 2009, I traveled to Greece on a study abroad trip. When I returned from that trip, I finished my degree program, graduated, and transferred to the University of Memphis. Coming to Southwest gave me a solid foundation and my experiences here have changed my life.

4. What are you currently doing and what do you hope to be doing five years from now? Currently, I am the International Studies Specialist at Southwest Tennessee Community College. I help to send students on study abroad trips;
I coordinate our Danish Exchange Program, and I work with our international students. You will see me at various events on campus trying to encourage students to travel abroad. In five years, I hope I am doing something very similar, because I love my job, but I want to see our program grow and travel to many more exciting countries.

5. What do you think is the best thing you received from your time at Southwest? The opportunity to travel with the International Studies program was the best thing I received. Being able to learn outside of the classroom changed my view of the world. With the program, I was able to visit Greece, Denmark, Belgium, and India, all while receiving credit for my classes.

6. If you could share anything with today’s students, what would it be? I would encourage all students to get involved with Southwest activities. I know many of our students come to class and go home, but Southwest offers much more than just classes. Being able to earn your degree should be a student’s number one concern, but you can also meet great people along the way. You just have to be willing to open yourself up to those opportunities.

7. What’s your favorite thing about our community? My favorite thing about our community is the diversity. We have so many different cultures at Southwest, and our international student population is big! I also appreciate the interaction between foreign and American students. It helps promote the exchange of cultures.

8. What’s the one thing you would change about our community? If I could change one thing, it would be the reluctance of our students to think outside the box. Sometimes we get stuck in our ways of thinking, and we can’t see other points of view. It’s not always easy, but we have to learn to be more open-minded and accepting of others.

9. Who was your favorite instructor at Southwest and do you have a message for him/her? I can’t say that I have one specific instructor but a few: Judy Hatmaker, Steve Haley, and Tamara McColgan. I can honestly say all of these professors challenged me and prepared me for my classes at the University of Memphis. They expect the best from their students, and they want to see that you are putting forth your best effort. I want to tell them thank you for the challenge.

10. What are you most proud of? I’m proud of my title and position at Southwest. I’m proud I’ve found a profession I love, and I get to help students travel abroad, when they may have not been able to do so without our help. I’m proud of my journey, even though it was not a smooth one. I’m proud to be a Southwest Alumni!

Don’t forget about our Alumni Joining/Renewal special. From now until December 31, any alumni who join or renew their membership will have their name entered into a drawing for a $25 Mastercard gift card. Dues are only $12, and help support scholarships, networking events and college programs. Just go to www.southwest.tn.edu/alumni to pay your dues.
You’ve seen her shake the rafters at the Hattiloo Theater in “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” bring audiences to their feet with her self-written and produced one-woman show, “Madam C.J. Walker,” thrill onlookers as ‘Sophia’ in the Play House on the Square’s production of “The Color Purple” and now, Southwest alumna Valerie Houston takes her ‘Sophia’ role to Boston, MA, in the SpeakEasy Stage Company’s production of “The Color Purple.”

When asked her initial reaction to being told she’d been casted in the musical, Houston responded, “My initial reaction to the news that I got the role was not only elation but surprise. The director offered me the role of ‘Sophia’ the very next day, which is unusual. Most of the time it takes some time for a production team to decide on who they want for a role. The director, during the audition, told me that Thursday night he would be on vacation that [upcoming] weekend and to expect an e-mail the following week, saying they were in a holding position. You can imagine how surprised I was to get an e-mail the very next morning, Friday, at 7:15 a.m., offering me the role of ‘Sophia.’”

Houston graduated from Southwest with an Associate of Science Degree in music. She had no idea that she’d end up on the theater stage acting and writing. “My first theatrical experience began at Southwest under the tutelage of Professor Levi Frazier. There, I wrote and performed my very first one-woman show entitled, “Madame C.J. Walker”, which I perform locally at various functions,” said Houston.

Valerie Houston in the Southwest production of Who Am I compiled by Deborah Frazier

Southwest’s Assistant Professor of Communications, Graphics and Fine Arts Levi Frazier, also co-founder, along with his wife, Deborah, of the Blues City Cultural Center, nurtured Houston and is one of her biggest supporters. “As Valerie’s mentor and former director, I can truthfully say that I have met very few performers with her desire to learn. Whatever knowledge she acquires in workshops or rehearsals, she takes and immediately applies in her writing as well as her acting. The fact she is a very talented writer, actress and singer helps. She is a director’s dream,” said Frazier.

Most recently, Houston won the 2013 Ostrander Award, the highest honor of excellence coveted by members of the Greater Memphis theatre community, for best supporting actress in a musical, “The Color Purple.”
Rory Terrell Thomas, executive director of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC) at Southwest, was selected as a 2013 honoree of the Memphis Business Journal’s Top 40 Under 40 Awards. Thomas was selected for his successful business and community leadership.

He holds a BSBA in Finance and an MBA from Christian Brothers University and is currently pursuing a second masters in management. His other professional background includes tenure at Morgan Stanley in the Wealth Management Department and The Mid-South Minority Business Council (MMBC) Continuum where he provided consulting services for minority businesses and area corporations.

Thomas is involved with the National Black MBA Association and NEXUS: A New Experience in Leadership. He is a member of Lindenwood Christian Church and is married to Nicolette Thomas with ALSAC/St. Jude.

This year’s Top 40 Under 40 luncheon will be held at the Hilton Memphis at noon on November 14. The presenting sponsor is Duncan-Williams Inc. Gold sponsors are Christian Brothers University and Commercial Bank and Trust.

Southwest Instructor Asked to Present at the International Image Conference

Tiffany Akin, instructor of Languages and Literature for Southwest, was asked to present her paper, “Tattoos and the American Fictional Character,” in a themed session at the Fourth International Conference on the Image. The conference was held at the University of Chicago in Chicago, IL, on October 18 and 19. It pulled together a cross-discipline of teachers, researchers and practitioners to present on varied areas of interest.

Regarding her presentation, Akin stated, “My interests range from how the visibly tattooed are perceived during job interviews and in working environments to societal cues that differ according to the gender of the tattooed individual and the placement of the tattoo itself. How tattooed individuals are written about in American literature is the focus of my dissertation.”

Akin is also a doctoral student and English instructor for the English Department, Cultural and Literary Studies at the University of Memphis.

Rory Thomas Receives a 2013 MBJ Top 40 Under 40 Award

Rory Terrell Thomas, executive director of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC) at Southwest, was selected as a 2013 honoree of the Memphis Business Journal’s Top 40 Under 40 Awards. Thomas was selected for his successful business and community leadership.

This year’s Top 40 Under 40 luncheon will be held at the Hilton Memphis at noon on November 14. The presenting sponsor is Duncan-Williams Inc. Gold sponsors are Christian Brothers University and Commercial Bank and Trust.
Saluquis Basketball Team Poised for a Stellar Season

New head coach Jerry Nichols, who came to Southwest from 2013 conference and region champion Motlow State Community College, says this season’s Saluqi squad “has all the ingredients needed to contend for national recognition. If we stay together and share the basketball, we can make a run to a national championship,” said Nichols. The new-look Saluqis have five student athletes who have already committed to NCAA Division I programs: Chris Hawkins (University of Memphis), DeVante Jones (Middle Tennessee State University), Charles Waters (Arkansas State University) and Jerron Washington and Andre Brown (University of Arkansas-Little Rock).

Although no players return from the 2012-2013 season, the Saluqis still have a wealth of experience. Brown, Hawkins, Jones, Washington, Waters, Perrin Buford, Kevonta Black and Deandre McKinnie all transferred to Southwest from Motlow State. This group played an important role in leading Motlow to a 26-4 record, the TCCAA Region VII championship and a NJCAA national tournament appearance last season. The Saluqis also add key transfers in 6’7” forward Craig Hill from Connors State Community College, who helped lead his team to the national tournament, and 5’10” guard Darius Tomlin, who played for Mississippi Valley State University as a freshman and was a four-time SWAC player of the week.

The Saluqis have a great nucleus of players led by Hawkins, a 6’6”, 245-pound forward who is the reigning Region VII tournament Most Valuable Player and a first-team All-TCCAA freshman selection. He is considered by many to be one of the top players in the country. Buford, a 6’7” guard, is considered one of the top 30 players in the country, and was also a first-team All-TCCAA performer last season. Jones, a 5’8” point guard, also has a top 100 ranking and was a first-team All-TCCAA selection.

The Saluqis have a great supporting cast in 6’7” Waters, a forward who is relentless on the boards; Brown, a 6’6” forward who has an all-around game; Washington, a 6’4” guard who is a hard-nosed defender; Black, a 5’10” true point guard who was a part-time starter at Motlow State last season; and red-shirt freshman McKinnie, a 6’4” shooter who has a knack for scoring. Otis Devine, a 6’3” guard who played at Southwest in the 2011-12 season, brings athleticism and dynamic scoring ability to the team.

Joining this impressive group of sophomores is a talented group of freshmen. Rasheed Brooks, a 6’6” guard from Mansfield, Ohio, is already receiving high major NJCAA attention. Dominic Nelson, a 6’10” center from Harlem, New York, brings toughness and is improving daily. The Saluqis have also added area players in twins Jovantae and Lavantae Waldon from Oakhaven High School. Jovantae, 6’7”, is a rebounder and defensive presence while Lavantae, 6’6”, is a scorer inside.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>EVENT / OPPONENT</th>
<th>WOMEN / MEN</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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*TCCAA / Region VII Games
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