SIFÉ Team Training Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

Walters State’s Students In Free Enterprise Team is partnering with third grade teachers to teach the principles of business in elementary schools. With the help of SIFÉ members, students have chosen a product, calculated the manufacturing cost and profit margin and will soon begin selling their wares. Offerings range from crunchy peanut balls to friendship bracelets. The SIFÉ Team will travel to Washington, D.C., to compete in the SIFÉ regional tournament.

Geier Grant Funds Workshops

Over 150 students have benefited from a series of workshops funded by the Geier initiative this year. The workshops were designed by the Office of Student Affairs to increase the enrollment and retention of African-American students. Students heard from several speakers and had the chance to get to know each other. “These workshops gave our minority students a chance to get together and talk about things that are of interest to them and it gave us a chance to see what their needs are,” explained Sheila Morris, coordinator of minority student recruitment at the college. “From a retention standpoint, these meetings introduce our students to each other and to the variety of services available. They also gave us great insight into how we can better recruit students from minority communities.”

Gallery Puts Spotlight on WSCC Creativity

For hundreds of Walters State alumni, the first taste of creative success came when their poems, short stories, art or photographs appeared in Gallery.

Now, the literary and art magazine is receiving some recognition of its own. The publication finished second in last year’s Society of Professional Journalists competition judging student magazines throughout the Southeast. It was the only community college publication honored by the organization. Throughout its 31 years, the magazine’s status has been a student-run publication. Gallery is put together largely through the efforts of a four-student editorial board. They choose the material, decide on a design and even find ways to work within a very limited budget.

Since 1985, student efforts have been guided by Sarah Eichelman, associate professor of English and faculty advisor to Gallery staff. “We are fortunate to have so many talented students interested in being involved with the magazine,” Eichelman said. She credits past and present Gallery staff members with maintaining very high quality standards for both content and design.

A good deal from a printer enabled last year’s staff to go with a four-color design. For most of its 30 issues, Gallery has been limited to two colors. That restraint, however, didn’t keep the students from finding creative ways to make the magazine’s appearance both attractive and interesting.

“Students are great at finding ways to work around budget and time constraints. They’ve used accent color and creative graphics to make the magazine look better than many student magazines that work with larger budgets,” Eichelman said.

Gallery’s reputation has grown so much that Walters State’s English faculty has been asked to present workshops entitled “Producing a Quality Magazine on a Shoestring Budget” at several regional conferences.

The driving force behind Gallery is the quality of submitted work. Each year, Eichelman is impressed with the essays, short stories, poems, photographs, drawings and other artwork submitted. “Much of what our students submit would be welcomed at literary publications at four-year universities,” Eichelman said. In fact, competition to be included is very stiff.

“Many excellent pieces don’t make the cut and that has nothing to do with the quality of the work. We simply have very limited space.” For students with work selected, publication brings a rare acknowledgement for their work at a relatively early point in their academic careers. At four-year universities, the honor of publication is usually reserved for a small number of senior students.

Eichelman said that, while the quality of submissions has remained high, the design of the magazine continues to evolve, aided by tremendous advances in technology. Not too long ago, submissions were actually cut-and-pasted using glue and scissors during the magazine’s lay-out. Now, all of that is done through mouse clicks.

While its primary mission is sharing the talents of students with a broader audience, Gallery has also served as a springboard for many creative careers. That first publication gives students the confidence to seek exposure for their work elsewhere. Many alumni are now working professionally in the arts and photography. Those with a passion for words have gone on to careers as newspaper columnists and English teachers.

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Alumnus Completes An Amazing Career Switch

Greenville banker Willie Anderson didn’t take the traditional route to a finance career. Nonetheless, he’s risen to the top of it, now serving as vice president and branch manager of First Tennessee Bank.

Over the past 10 years, Anderson has completed what most would consider an amazing career switch. His journey began in 1991 when the manufacturing firm he worked for closed.

“I had worked in industry for 15 to 20 years and I found myself without a job,” Anderson recalled.

“With retirement 20 years down the road, I was wondering what I could do so that I could retire.”

Having seen many industries come and go during the first half of his career, he wanted to find a stable career, one where his abilities and work ethic would play a larger role in determining his future than local business cycles. He enrolled at Walters State in search of such a career. He secured a grant to pay his tuition and, to help pay his living expenses, he found a job as a courier at First Tennessee Bank. At the time, he didn’t see the job leading anywhere, but he was grateful to have it.

“The best thing about the job was that it left my mornings free for college. I delivered mail and worked in maintenance, cleaning the offices and mowing the yard.”

While those tasks may at first seem unrelated to his current job, Anderson said that’s far from true. Those routine and sometimes mundane tasks gave him a perspective few bankers have.

“I gained so much knowledge during that time. I was able to observe so many people and see how a bank really works.”

Before graduating from Walters State, Anderson had moved up to a teller position.

“As I continued taking classes, other doors opened for me at the bank. By the time I graduated from Tusculum, a promotion was waiting.”

Anderson still remembers his first classes when he returned to school after a long absence.

“I remember going to that first math class and hearing the professor talk about x minus y. When I was in school, we were still talking about counting apples and oranges,” he said.

With some hard work and a little help from his professors, Anderson made it through that first math class and many others.

“You can tell when someone appreciates a job and does it because they enjoy it, not for the pay. That’s how it was with the faculty members at Walters State.”

Now, as a manager, Anderson encourages employees of the banks he oversees in Greeneville and Mosheim to include education in their future plans.

“So many times, a lot of true stars are bypassed because they don’t have an education. Everybody has the potential to succeed. It just needs to be brought to the surface.”

WSCC Leads Regional P-16 Educational Efforts

The Mid-East Tennessee P-16 Regional Council for Excellence in Education was the first regional organization to receive official recognition by the state P-16 Council.

P-16 is a comprehensive system that links all education levels together, from pre-school (P) through the senior year of college (16), in an effort to improve education in Tennessee by coordinating and using existing resources.

“It is an honor to be recognized as the first certified P-16 council in the state and a credit to all the individuals on our council who are working together to improve education throughout our 10-county service area,” said Dr. Jack Campbell, Walters State president.

The regional council includes area leaders from government, education and industry. Its priorities are to strengthen connections and smooth transitions between secondary and post-secondary education; promote access to competent and caring teachers; and increase public awareness of the link between an educated citizenry and a healthy economy.

Dr. Lori Campbell, dean of the Behavioral and Social Sciences Division at Walters State, spearheaded the effort.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The Walters State vision statement proclaims that our college will be a “regional college of choice,” and surely that is what we have become. Throughout our ten county service area ranging from Hancock County in the north to Sevier County in the south and from Greene County in the east to Union County in the west, more high school students choose to begin their college studies at Walters State than any other college or university.

Our popularity with graduating high school seniors contributed to another record enrollment this fall when 6,214 students registered in our college level credit programs. Throughout the year, we will serve an additional 4,000-5,000 students in job training and continuing education classes. Those students can be found throughout East Tennessee on our main campus and Public Safety Center located in Morristown, our Walters State Great Smoky Mountains Expo Center in Jefferson County, our Greeneville/Greene County Center for Higher Education, our Claiborne County Center, our Sevier County Campus, or at any one of 27 additional teaching sites.

Our students may enroll in 49 university parallel programs designed for transfer to senior institutions or in 31 technical career programs designed for immediate employment following graduation. And, speaking of graduation, Walters State boasts one of the highest graduation rates among Tennessee community colleges graduating approximately 900 students per year.

Walters State continues to receive statewide and national recognition for many of our programs and services. For example, our Nursing Program recently was ranked among the top 10 percent of nursing programs nationally, our Public Safety/Criminal Justice Program was ranked among the top 25 such programs in the nation, and other programs such as our Culinary Arts, Students in Free Enterprise, Phi Theta Kappa, and athletic teams have received national recognition.

We are proud to say that all of our academic programs eligible for accreditation are, in fact, accredited and that our students excel in their upper division studies after transferring to universities.

Of course, it takes a lot of highly qualified, dedicated faculty and staff to support such a wide-ranging and successful enterprise, and our 370 full-time and 450 part-time employees are among the best to be found on any campus. And, speaking of superlatives, our college receives invaluable support from the Walters State Community College Foundation which has been recognized as one of the most successful community college foundations in the country for a college of our size.

The support we receive from our trustees, alumni, and other friends of the college remains one of our greatest assets and continues to inspire our best efforts.

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FACULTY FOOTNOTES

Carla Todaro, assistant professor of English, presented “Unearthing Huck and Myself: New Millennium Students as Archeologists of the American Spirit in American Literature II” at the spring conference of the Two Year English Association. The conference was held in Huntsville, Ala.

Dr. Deborah Hicks, head of the Music and Theatre Department, has written and produced the musical, “Around the World with the USO.” She also served as musical director for the recording of “Celebrate Freedom: The Musical.”

Dr. David White, professor of English, is serving as a faculty mentor for the Regents Online Degree Program. He presented “Trials and Triumphs in an Online Class” at the Two Year English Association’s spring conference.

P.J. Brice-Means, assistant professor of English, has been named to Who’s Who Among America’s Business and Professional Women.

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The Walters State Foundation has hopes that it might soon be out of the property management business. With the sale of the Pigeon Forge property held in trust by the foundation, the sale of other properties given outright to the foundation, and the sale of the Maplecrest Apartments in downtown Morristown, only the college's downtown campus in Greeneville remains as a major foundation holding.

Now with Gov. Bredesen's proposed budget revealed during his recent State of the State Address, $3.3 million has been earmarked for the purpose of allowing the state to begin purchasing high priority facilities that are being leased by the state. If this budget measure is adopted, it would represent the first funding of an initiative undertaken several years ago. At that time, various state agencies were asked to prioritize those facilities they were leasing using state dollars. As a result of that exercise, Walters State's Greeneville/Greene County Center for Higher Education (Greeneville Center) made its way to the top of the priorities submitted by its governing board, the Tennessee Board of Regents.

The college has learned that the acquisition list has been compiled and the college's Greeneville Center is one of seven facilities that have made the list. The facilities that are purchased under this arrangement will apparently require one-third of the cost to be raised through local contributions similar to the formula proposed to be imposed on all new capital construction under the governor's new budget. The Center facility is an approximately 140,000 square foot former hospital complex originally owned by Laughlin Memorial Hospital. The property was acquired on behalf of the college in the fall of 1995 through a three-way partnership of the Town of Greeneville, Greene County, and the Walters State Foundation. Since that time, the foundation has upgraded the Center by purchasing a new chiller, new boilers, a new roof, a new domestic hot water system, and other smaller enhancements too numerous to mention. The Center is now fully owned by the foundation and enrolls over 1,000 credit students.

In anticipation that the state might eventually acquire the Center facility, the Walters State Foundation has committed itself to placing any funds received from the state for the purchase of the Greeneville Center in a restricted account to be used only in Greene County for further enhancements of Walters State's Greeneville operations. President Campbell has urged foundation trustees to be careful to not "overstate our case" since the governor, the Board of Regents, and the State Building Commission will ultimately decide whether the state will acquire the Center facility. According to Dr. Campbell, "We are only laying the groundwork to support such a decision when, and if, it is made. By taking this action, we are ensuring that if the foundation is to be compensated by the state, that money which was raised in Greeneville and Greene County will remain in Greeneville and Greene County for the further benefit of our educational program."

Record Number Attend Ag Club’s Horse Events

The Walters State Ag Club knows how to draw a crowd. Several of the club's fifth winter horse series events drew close to 200 participants.

Horse enthusiasts come from all areas of eastern Tennessee, south-western Virginia, eastern Kentucky and western North Carolina to take part in roping, barrel and pole runs and the show's finale, the speed show. This year's series also featured two open arena nights and a youth night.

The series began in 2000 as a combined effort between the college's current agriculture students and past graduates.

"Our alumni really helped us get this series started," said Roger Brooks, head of the college's agriculture and Production Horticulture Department. "Many had experience with roping and barrel racing and wanted to do something when the Expo Center opened. It's a natural fit for us."

The series is scheduled on 16 different days from January through March, keeping Ag Club members busy. They promote the events, handle the money and help participants. In return, the events give students the valuable opportunity to network with WSCC's Ag Alumni Club members, many of whom are community leaders.

The series also gives the agricultural program a great deal of exposure.

"This lets the general public know that we do have a strong agriculture program and we are committed to livestock education. Our enrollment started going up the year after the first horse series," Brooks said.

Proceeds from the series fund scholarships for agriculture majors at the college. This year's series was sponsored by Jefferson Federal and Century 21 Masengill-McCrary Realtors/Masengill Auction Company.

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WSCC Looks to Repeat 2003 Baseball, Softball Successes

The WSCC baseball and softball teams have opened their seasons looking to surpass the success of last year's campaigns. That won't be easy. The Senators baseball team is coming off of a 47-13 season in which they made their second ever trip to the JUCO World Series in Grand Junction, Colo. The Lady Senators went 38-12 last year.

Coach Ken Campbell's team has been ranked No. 3 in the nation preseason by Collegiate Baseball News, No. 5 by Baseball America, and No. 13 in the NJCAA Coaches Poll. So far, they've lived up to the hype.

WSCC opened the season on a tear, rolling to an 8-1 record overall and 3-0 in TJCCAA conference play by March.

The only blemish on their record so far has been a 3-2 setback at Truett-McConnell in a game that was shortened due to darkness. WSCC did claim a 10-5 victory in the opening game with Truett.

The Senators boast a dominating pitching staff and a solid hitting offense. The WSCC pitchers have allowed just 14 runs in nine games, and the staff ERA is just 1.13 for the season. Adam Howard is currently 3-0, and Jon Kirby and Jordan Compton are both 2-0.

The Senators bats have had some punch as well, as the team averages over nine runs per game. Freshman Tyler Westmoreland has already hit four home runs, and All-American candidates Boodle Clark, Chuck Hargis and Jared Gaston are all off to fast starts as well.

As for the Lady Senators softball squad, Coach Larry Sauceman had the difficult chore of replacing both pitchers and several position players from last year's team.

Most of the softball starters graduated, so that left many starting spots open heading into the season, and some fresh faces have filled those spots.

The Lady Senators most glaring need was on the pitcher's mound, and four newcomers had an outstanding opening day against Cumberland. Beth Williams tossed a one-hitter in a 1-0 victory, and Jamie Mecimore, Jessie Shelton and Angie Hensley combined for a three-hitter in a 7-0 triumph.

The freshmen will be tested early and often this season due to a tough schedule. The Lady Senators have just 10 home dates this season, and they will make trips to national powerhouses Okaloosa-Walton, Louisville, Young Harris, Volunteer State, and Chattanooga State.

Pitcher Adam Howard is one of the players expected to lead the Senators this season. Howard, a sophomore, has signed to play baseball at the University of Tennessee next year.