

WCC Current

The Community Newsletter of Wytheville Community College

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Summer 2009

Two WCC faculty follow in Marco Polo's footsteps

Marco Polo did it more than 700 years ago.

Richard M. Nixon did it nearly 40 years ago.

And two Wytheville Community College faculty members just got back from doing it.

Donna Fender, Associate Professor of Administrative Support Technology, and Colene Kilgore, Assistant Professor of Accounting, recently toured the Peoples Republic of China as part of a group comprised of four-year and two-year college faculty and students from Southwest Virginia.

Huffard named Dean of Science and Health at WCC

Lorri M. Huffard was recently named the new Dean of Science and Health at Wytheville Community College. She had been serving as the Interim Dean for the past year.

"We are very pleased to have Lorri Huffard join the administration at WCC," said President Charlie



Lorri Huffard

White. "She has done an admirable job as Interim Dean of Science and Health and I know she'll continue to serve the college and its students well in the coming years."

Huffard was a long-time instructor and later program head of WCC's Medical Laboratory Technology Program. She earned her bachelor's degree from Roanoke College in 1986 and her master's degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in 1991. She is currently completing her doctoral

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The trip was eye-opening for both Fender and Kilgore, neither of whom had ever travelled overseas before.

"I thought the people were wonderful," said Fender. "I thought they were gracious and welcoming. It was really noisy in the city, but the Chinese people were very calm. No matter how much traffic you were in, you never saw aggression. There was a lot of horn blowing to say 'I'm merging,' but no horn blowing to say 'you're a jerk.'"

Kilgore mentioned that one thirtyish Chinese woman they met pointed out that in her lifetime the country had gone from "black and white to color," and she didn't mean television, though doubtless that has occurred as well. The Chinese woman was speaking of clothing. In addition to being able to own their own property, including automobiles, the Chinese people



Donna Fender and Colene Kilgore are pictured near a gate of the Forbidden City in Beijing.

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Truck driving program a success in Smyth County

Wytheville Community College's Career Studies Certificate program in Truck Driving was offered this summer for the first time in Marion and the program was a success.

But that is just the beginning.

"WCC and Virginia Highlands Community College are partnering to offer new college programs in Smyth County," said Dr. Stacy E. Thomas, Dean of Workforce, Continuing Education, and Occupational-Technical Programs.

"Our Career Studies Certificate program in Truck Driving, which began in 2008 at the Crossroads Institute in Galax, is currently being offered at Marion Senior High School," said Thomas. "There's more to come, though, as we are committed to bringing more new programs to Marion and Smyth County."

WCC already operates the Smyth County Education Center beside the county industrial park near Atkins. The center opened in 1991, offering day and evening classes to county residents.

"Even with the convenient location of our education center in Atkins, WCC wants to bring higher education even closer to Marion," explained Thomas. "We kicked off that effort with our Truck Driving program, and we are very thankful for the support of Smyth County's School Division Superintendent, Dr. Michael Robinson, and Director of Curriculum and Instruction Kyle Rhodes in helping us bring that program to MSHS."

Bill Reeves, director of the Truck Driving program agrees. "I'm excited that WCC is expanding its Truck Driving program into the Smyth County area. I feel this program will be beneficial in preparing Smyth County residents for employment in the trucking industry." He added: "I would like to thank the Smyth County Schools administration for working with us to



Truck Driving program director Bill Reeves (left) prepares for road training with a student.

make this program possible."

Thomas noted that WCC and VHCC are very aware of Smyth County's high unemployment rate. "We recognize that Smyth County residents need access to high-quality educational programs so they can succeed in the workplace. Whether people are facing layoffs or are simply under-employed and not earning what they could be in their current jobs, we can provide them the skills that will help them begin a new career or simply find a better job," said Thomas.

"Even though neither college is located far from Smyth and WCC's Smyth Education Center is practically in Marion's backyard, our goal is see that the training is offered so close to home that Smyth Countians won't be able to pass up these wonderful opportunities to improve their lives and their earning potential."

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Overall employment of truck drivers and driver/sales workers is expected to increase by 8 percent over the 2006-16 decade, which is about as fast as the average for all occupations, due to growth in the economy and in the amount of freight carried by truck.

Thomas encourages any Smyth County residents who have suggestions about other academic programs Wytheville Community College might offer in Smyth County to contact Sandy Havens at the Smyth County Education Center, 783-1777, or via e-mail at wchaves@wcc.vccs.edu.

WCC's Truck Driving program was funded by a grant from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission.

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WCC offers new engineering specialization degree

Beginning this fall, Wytheville Community College is offering a new associate's degree in Science with a specialization in Engineering that can lead to a bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia.

The first two years of the Engineering Specialization program will be completed at WCC, with the final two years of the transfer program completed entirely via distant learning course delivery from the University of Virginia. The completed bachelor's degree in Engineering will be awarded by UVA to successful students.

"We are very excited about this new partnership between WCC and UVA," said Lorri M. Huffard, Wytheville Community College's Dean of Science and Health. "The new Science degree with a specialization in Engineering provides a wonderful opportunity for local students to earn an associate's degree from WCC and then complete a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering Science from the University of Virginia without having to leave their local communities."

The partnership between WCC and UVA is part of the University of Virginia School of Engineering and Applied Science's "Engineers PRODUCED in Virginia" initiative. Students who desire to complete the two-year program at WCC and then transfer to an engineering program other than UVA's should acquaint themselves with the requirements of the major department in the college or university to which they plan to transfer.

According to the University of Virginia's website, students who complete the WCC Science program with a specialization in Engineering with a GPA of at least 3.4 will receive guaranteed admission to the UVA. Engineering Science bachelor's degree program.

"The convenience of this program is that students can complete the University of Virginia portion of their studies via distance learning," added Huffard. "This eliminates the need for expensive room and board fees at U.Va. and travel to Charlottesville. Distance learning is the 21st Century's answer to the traditional classroom."

Courses included in the WCC portion of the transfer degree program include: College Chemistry, Introductory Linear Algebra, Introduction to Engineering, Engineering Mathematics-Statics, Engineering Mathematics-Dynamics, Vector Calculus, Mechanics

of Materials, and University Physics.

"The goal of all our transfer degree programs," said Huffard, "is to provide our students with their freshman and sophomore years of college with the expectation that they will move on to the four-year college or university and earn their bachelor's degrees. With Wytheville Community College's low tuition, that means students—and most notably, their parents—can save enough money in tuition and fees while at WCC to practically pay for their junior and senior years at the university level. That is a real educational value."

UVA publicity notes that while the national job market is bleak, "engineering jobs are the toughest to fill in the United States. With a lack of students pursuing engineering degrees and federal stimulus money pegged for infrastructure and green energy projects, the demand is expected to grow."

For more information about Wytheville Community College's associate degree in Science with a specialization in Engineering, please contact Lorri M. Huffard at 276-223-4829 or via email at wchuffl@wcc.vccs.edu.

Johnson Memorial Endowment established through foundation

The Wytheville Community College Educational Foundation recently received donations to establish the "Robert Eddystone Johnson and Virginia Williams Johnson Memorial Scholarship Endowment." Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were lifetime residents of Wythe County. They built and operated the Johnson Motel and Restaurant in west Wytheville and had several farms. Mr. Johnson was a World War II veteran. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were actively involved in the community.

"We are very pleased to announce the establishment of this new scholarship," said Dr. Charlie White, President of Wytheville Community College. "Scholarships are a great way to honor the memory of family members while providing much-needed financial assistance to deserving WCC students from Wythe County." With the current economic recession, more students than ever are realizing the importance of

WCC employees honored with Workforce awards

On May 20, the WCC Workforce Development Office hosted the annual Workforce Development Services Chancellor's Instructor/Trainer Awards in Galax Hall on the main campus of WCC in Wytheville.

Representatives from each of the five Virginia community colleges serving Southwest Virginia were in attendance to receive awards, including four faculty/staff members from WCC: Joe Bybee, Vicki Delp, Roger Halsey and Dr. Rhonda Catron-Wood. Other award recipients in attendance were from Mountain Empire, New River, Southwest Virginia, and Virginia Highlands community colleges.

"We need to publicly recognize our own, and each others' accomplishments, reward people for their efforts and let our public know what we do," said WCC President Charlie White, as he welcomed those in attendance and congratulated the award recipients.

The ceremony began with music provided by The Whitetop Mountain Band, followed by a catered lunch. Special guest speaker, Carolyn Dankowski, Plant Manager of the Blue Ridge Gatorade Facility in Wytheville, gave a presentation on the successful partnership between Gatorade and WCC.

Joe Bybee, employer trainer in WCC's Workforce Development department, received the "Employer Services" award for providing service to area employers. Vicki Delp, Coordinator of Grants Compliance for the Wytheville Manufacturing Technology Center, received the "Occupation Specific Instruction and Services" award for her assistance in providing college courses and services within Workforce Development. Roger Halsey, WCC Workforce Development Coordinator, received the "Career Paths" award for his work with the Tech Prep program. Dr. Rhonda Catron-Wood, Director of College Development, received the "Community Services" award for her assistance in securing resources for new programs at WCC.

The Workforce Development Services Chancellor's Award is designed to recognize outstanding contributions made by Workforce Development Services instructors, trainers and staff. Colleges select award recipients based on course evaluations, years of service, assistance to the college in program development and support in serving Virginia's workforce.

•Huffard

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degree at TUI University.

Huffard served as a faculty member at WCC from 1991-2000. She returned to head the Medical Laboratory Technology program in 2005. Prior to becoming the Interim Dean, Huffard completed a reorganization of the MLT program by expanding the program to include students on the Mountain Empire Community College and Southwest Virginia Community College campuses, using Elluminate, a two-way videoconferencing distance education format.

"As a health professions faculty member in the Medical Laboratory Technology Program, Mrs. Huffard's teaching background and program head experience provide a smooth transition into the dean's post," said Dr. Ron Proffitt, WCC's Vice President of Instruction and Student Development. "The fact that she has already worked in the dean's position successfully during the past year proves that she can handle the job. Our students, our faculty, and the college in general will benefit for many years to come from her work as WCC's new Dean of Health and Science."

As the Dean of Science and Health, Huffard oversees the faculty members and academic programs in areas such as biology, chemistry, and WCC's numerous health professions curricula, including Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Physical Therapist Assistant, and Medical Laboratory Technology.

•Johnson

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earning a college education, and the need for scholarships is greater than normal.

According to Dr. Rhonda Catron-Wood, WCC's Director of College Development, funds received to establish the Johnson Endowment will be invested, with only interest earned to be used to provide scholarships to students for generations to come. Initial donations to the "Robert Eddystone Johnson and Virginia Williams Johnson Memorial Endowment" were made by the family. Anyone else wishing to contribute to the endowment may do so by contacting Catron-Wood at 276-223-4772.

The WCC Educational Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax-deductible as allowable by IRS guidelines.

Hursts recognized with philanthropy leadership award

The Wytheville Community College Educational Foundation recently selected William “Bill” and Diane Hurst as the recipients of the 2009 Virginia Community College System’s “Chancellor’s Award for Leadership in Philanthropy.” Chancellor Glenn DuBois of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) established the “Chancellor’s Awards for Leadership in Philanthropy” in 2006, and annually recognizes 23 outstanding community college benefactors – one honoree from each of the system’s 23 colleges.

The “Chancellor’s Award for Leadership in Philanthropy” is designed to recognize the vital role of community college benefactors. “The event is a way to say ‘thank you’ to the men and women who help individuals identify, elevate, and fulfill their dreams of the future,” said VCCS Chancellor Glenn DuBois. The Wytheville Community College Educational Foundation Board of Directors unanimously selected the Hursts as this year’s recipients based on the couple’s long-standing commitment to providing scholarships to WCC students.

“The Hursts have been among the college’s most dedicated supporters of the WCC Educational Foundation’s scholarship program,” said Robert Kegley, President of the WCC Educational Foundation. “Their generosity has made a huge difference in the lives of many WCC students.”

During an interview with the Virginia Community College System, Bill Hurst was asked to comment on his reasons for giving to WCC. Hurst said: “My family was not well off, so I received a scholarship through the National Honor Society which paid for my first year at Wytheville Community College. I’ve always had an appreciation for that and felt like I needed to pay back the school and the community.”



Diane and Bill Hurst

The Hursts have established two endowments: the “William and June Henderson Hurst Memorial Scholarship Endowment” in memory of Bill’s parents, and the “Owen and Jean Umberger Golden Anniversary Scholarship Endowment” in honor of Diane’s parents. Both Bill and Diane attended WCC. Bill Hurst stated: “My parents always said to get an education. My mother graduated from high school, but my father did not. However, we were expected to go to college. Our parents really stressed a college education, and we’ve been grateful ever since.”

“The Hursts truly understand the importance of education,” said Dr. Charlie White, WCC President. “We sincerely appreciate their commitment to helping deserving students who might not otherwise be able to obtain an education.”

As part of the award, the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education is providing a \$3,000 Commonwealth Legacy Scholarship to a WCC student. It will be given in honor of the Hursts.

Upcoming Events

Sept. 18--“Access WCC” radio program airs on WVBX, 95.3 FM and WWWJ, 1360 AM.

Sept. 19--Bluegrass and Old-Time Jamboree, George Wythe High School Auditorium, 7 p.m.

Sept. 26--“Saturday Matinee Heroes” film festival, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Snyder Auditorium in Grayson Hall.

WCC holds health professions programs open house

Wytheville Community College showcased the newly-renovated Galax Hall and its various health professions programs at an Open House on the main campus in Wytheville on Friday, June 12.

Among the highlights of the free Open House was demonstrations of the cutting-edge health technology simulation equipment purchased with grant funds generously provided by the Wythe-Bland Community Foundation.

“We were very eager to show the community what we’ve done with Galax Hall,” said WCC President Charlie White, “and to offer a big ‘thank you’ to the Wythe-Bland Community Foundation for providing us with some of the most advanced health professions simulation equipment in the entire state. I believe our recent open house was a great success.”

A \$1-million grant from the Wythe-Bland Community Foundation funded several health initiatives at WCC, including the purchase of state-of-the-art medical simulation equipment.

Among the items the college has purchased for use in its health professions programs are: a radiography simulator (\$250,000); virtual “SimMan” patient simulators (\$375,210); respiratory care software/simulation equipment (\$150,000), dental hygiene software/simulation equipment (\$100,000), and virtual IV simulation training (\$15,000).

According to President White, the simulation equipment and software will greatly enhance the college’s already exceptional health professions programs. “Thanks to the grant from the Wythe-

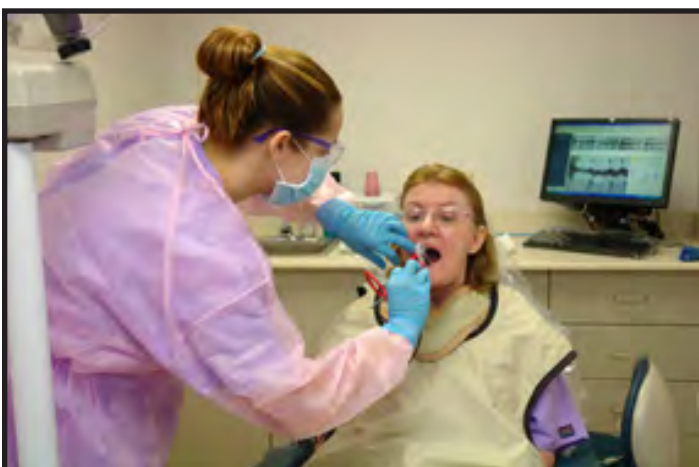


WCC Nursing Students work with two new “SimMan” patient simulators in the lab on the first floor of Fincastle Hall. A SimMan can simulate hundreds of various symptoms from perspiration to bleeding.

Bland Community Foundation, WCC’s allied health programs can now truly rival the quality of similar programs at many four-year colleges and universities. The simulation equipment and software will enhance our students’ learning experiences using 21st Century technology.”

The physical renovations to Galax Hall were extensive. They included the remodeling of the entire bottom floor for use by WCC’s Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting programs. The WCC Dental Clinic, which is open to the public, is also located there. The upper floor, which houses the WCC Nursing Program, was renovated to add larger multi-purpose classrooms. The alterations to Galax Hall were made possible by state funds.

Equipment purchased with a grant from the Wythe-Bland Community Foundation is demonstrated by students in WCC’s Respiratory Care program during the recent Open House.



A WCC Dental Hygiene student demonstrates cutting-edge digital x-ray equipment.

Armentrouts establish endowment under WCC Foundation

Olin and Rowena Armentrout of Max Meadows recently donated \$20,000 to establish the “Olin and Rowena Armentrout Scholarship Endowment” through the Wytheville Community College Educational Foundation. The new endowment will provide scholarships to deserving WCC students.

Olin and Rowena are long-time friends and supporters of Wytheville Community College. Olin was one of the founders of Wytheville Community College. He was appointed to serve on the first College Board when WCC was established in 1963 as a two-year branch of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. When the Virginia Community College System was formed in 1967, Armentrout was again appointed to the College Board as a representative from Wythe County, and he served an additional 12 years. During his tenure on the Board, he was elected to serve as both Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board. In 1998, he was again appointed to the College Board and was reappointed in 2002. He served on the selection committees for all of WCC’s presidents. Former WCC College Board Chair Craig Allison noted that “Armentrout’s unprecedented five terms on the WCC College Board are due to the fact that Olin consistently supported the mission of WCC and the VCCS.”

Throughout the years, Olin received numerous recognitions for his service to the college. In 2003, he was given WCC’s inaugural “Presidential Medal of Merit,” and in 2004, he received an Honorary Associate Degree in Humane Letters. Olin was honored in 2005 as the first-ever recipient of the “Chairman’s Award for Meritorious Service by the State Board for Community Colleges”; this award was given in recognition of Armentrout’s service on WCC’s Board, the leadership role he has played in the establishment and life of WCC, and his participation in college-related activities.

In 2007, Olin received WCC’s prestigious “Distinguished Service Award.” In nominating Olin for the award, retired WCC faculty member Don Alexander wrote: “While Olin Armentrout has had other fine recognition by WCC and the VCCS, the ‘Distinguished Service Award’ justly acknowledges Olin’s selfless service to this institution and the citizens it serves. He is truly deserving of this recognition.”

Beyond Olin’s service to WCC, he has received many awards for his community service, including the Outstanding Citizen of the Year award from the Wytheville-Wythe-Bland Chamber of Commerce in December 2004.

Olin is a retired federal mail carrier and held national office for 12 years with the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association. He served as labor representative, as well as held positions of president, vice-president, and secretary/treasurer with the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association. He retired with a total of 32 years of federal service.

Rowena Armentrout has also been a strong supporter of education, having taught in Wythe County Public Schools for 25 years. She served as a teacher at Max Meadows Elementary School.



Alumni Gather in Hillsville

Wytheville Community College graduates, former teachers, and their families gathered at the Carter Pines Picnic Shelter, adjacent to the Carroll Wellness Center, in Hillsville, on Friday, July 24. Approximately 60 people attended the event, which featured free

food and music by the old-time group the White Top Mountain Band.



•China

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have embraced colorful clothing, a great change since the Maoist days of drab apparel.”

“It’s still a Communist country,” explained Fender, “but it’s a more open environment. Their government is now allowing a more Western attitude.”

Fender and Kilgore joined a group of 28 faculty and staff from the University of Virginia at Wise, Emory and Henry, and Marshall University for the trip, including faculty members from Virginia Highlands and Southwest Virginia community colleges. The majority of the trip was funded by a grant. WCC supplemented the travel for the two faculty through professional development funds. The travel program, “International Business Studies in China” was funded by a U.S. Department of Education Business and Education Grant.

The trip’s first-week itinerary included time in Shanghai, where Fender and Kilgore stayed at the Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) guest house, visits to the Yangshan deep water port and the Yu Garden, and a Huangpu River cruise. They also incorporated study time into their trip, participating in lectures on topics such as Chinese Modern History and the Chinese Economy. “When we were in Shanghai that first week,” explained Fender, “we truly were studying.”

The early part of the second week found them in Hangzhou, where they toured the Lingyin Temple at the Pagoda of Six Harmonies, and saw a show entitled “Impression of West Lake,” which was performed entirely on water. Midway through their second week, the group arrived in Beijing, where they visited Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, the Great Wall, and various Olympic venues.

One of the highlights of the trip for both Fender and Kilgore was seeing Shanghai in the company of and through the eyes of their Chinese “pen pals,” who met them at the SISU guest house and took them on a tour of the city. “It was fun to spend a day with those kids,” Fender said of the twenty-something students. Kilgore agreed: “They just showed us things that we’d not have seen otherwise. The best meal I think that I had was when we went to a restaurant and the kids ordered our food for us—after asking whether we liked our food spicy or not.” The two had corresponded with their pen pals for a few weeks prior to their trip.

When the group visited the famous Forbidden City in Beijing, notes Kilgore, “It was tourist day. They had two national holidays while we were in Beijing and the Chinese also like to go out and see the attractions. It was packed,” she added. The Forbidden City was once the Chinese imperial palace from the Ming Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty, which covered a period from the early 1400s to the early 1900s.

As proof that the world is smaller than it seems, Fender offered an anecdote about a particular meeting they had with an American living in China: “One of the last days we were there in Beijing we were supposed to meet someone from Southwest Virginia who does business in China. Well, this tall guy comes walking in and I was saying, ‘boy, he looks familiar.’ He comes over and introduces himself and it was Chuck Brown, the brother of Doug Brown,” who is the director of Old Dominion University’s TELETECHNET site on the campus of Wytheville Community College. Fender noted that she graduated from Marion Senior High School in 1978 and Chuck Brown graduated from MSHS a year later. Kilgore noted that Chuck Brown is also a graduate of WCC.

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