Mentors help at-risk students succeed

By ASHLEY JOHNSON

The African-American Male Mentoring program launched in August by TR academic advisor Freddie Sandifer III. While researching, he noticed that African-American and Latino males were shown to do worse academically, and their dropout rate was high, he said.

“Stats show that the TR Campus had 250 African-American males start college in the previous year,” he said. “By the end of the year, we lost 100 of those students.”

In a meeting for Achieving the Dream, an initiative to make a college education possible for minorities and low-income students, Sandifer questioned what was being done to help better serve African-American and Latino males. He was challenged to come up with something to begin solving the issue. His answer was the mentoring program, he said.

“So many times, they have been told that ‘they can’t do anything’ and ‘you don’t have it’; so we’re taking a different approach,” he said. “We’re telling them, ‘You are worth it’.”

TCC renovates, repairs campuses’ aging buildings, systems

By BETHANY PETERSON

It takes almost $70 million to maintain the 3.5 million square feet of buildings that make up the five TCC campuses, the district office and numerous satellite centers.

That’s the amount TCC budgeted for maintenance and development department directed by Kirby Chadwell.

Actual maintenance is only a small part of the department’s work. Prioritizing, scheduling, budgeting and finding preventative measures are hidden parts of the work.

“We can’t do everything at the same time,” Chadwell said. “We have to figure out strategically what we can do. It depends on the weather. Often, it relates to safety so they have to take priority over other construction projects.”

That places Code Blue phones and fire safety systems on the top of the list. Code Blue phones are tall cylindrical poles that have an emergency phone and a camera mounted on them. The phones, some already installed on TREC and NE campuses, allow access to emergency personnel, and the cameras let the emergency responder see the caller and the situation to give the best advice.

Installation on other campuses is slated for completion by August, Chadwell said.

Fire safety systems, fire alarms and internal sprinkler systems also need attention across the district, he said. The list of fire systems needing upgrading or improvement is long, Chadwell said.

The department plays a balancing act between timely fixes and not disrupting classes.

“We’re moving to a much more efficient lighting system,” Chadwell said. “By and large, it’s interior lighting.”

But replacements can’t happen when classes are in session.

“There are certain times of the year we can’t work on certain things,” Chadwell said. “A lot of holidays, so we’re taking a different approach.”

One way renovation needs come to attention is through the campus presidents.

“I do walk about with [the NW facilities manager],” said Elva LeBlanc, NW Campus president. “We talk about areas of the campus. Then we have districts for facilities people follow up and do a full assessment.”

Once needs are identified and validated, a timeline is created.

That sometimes means moving classes or not offering a class at all, LeBlanc said.

They are renovating the swimming pool, so we haven’t offered any swimming classes,” she said.

Money management is important to the department.

“A lot of our budget this year is MEP [mechanical, electrical and plumbing],” Chadwell said, “somewhat to support the Olympic-size pool. We’re taking a different approach.”

That’s the amount TCC budgeted for maintenance on certain things, Chadwell said. “A lot of holidays, so they hold part of the budget back for emergency or unexpected needs, Chadwell said.

On one emergency happened last year when part of South Campus flooded, taking months and thousands of dollars to repair.

To prevent another flood, the department is planning to improve drainage on South Campus. This is one of several projects the department is working on to improve drainage on South Campus.

Workers lay tiles to define the lanes in the NW Campus pool. Various classes have been canceled this semester to allow for the renovations to the Olympic-size pool.

Teacher resigns after students, bosses complain

By BETHANY PETERSON

A SE Campus adjunct instructor resigned Nov. 15 after two students objected to how Islam was portrayed in his class and an administrator questioned the class syllabus and his teaching style.

Paul Derengowski taught a world religions class that covers Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism, according to the district syllabus.

Two students in the class, who told the class they were Muslims, questioned part of his lecture regarding the history of the prophet Muhammad, Derengowski said.

When he brought other sources including the Qur’an to the next class, the two students became angry and disruptive, he said.

After class, he went to the campus police and filed a report because he felt threatened, he said.

One of the students then sent him an email to other members of the class, which was later forwarded to Derengowski in the email, the student said Derengowski was teaching in a hateful and biased way and that the two students felt they did the right thing standing up to him, Derengowski said. The email also included links to some of Derengowski’s writings that he had posted online.

Derengowski said he was asked to meet with Barbara Cox, SE Campus vice president of academic affairs, on Nov. 15. Cox addressed both Derengowski’s teaching methods and his personal website, and Derengowski felt he was being required to change parts of his syllabus that had portions of his website as links but were not

Religion
**Motivational speaker to encourage etiquette at NTW Campus Luncheon**

By ZANAB JAFFREY

reporter

NT Campus will host an etiquette Luncheon Dec. 7, to help students impress friends, employers and others. Students may need to know how to act on a date, or when to keep their cell phone on silent. The keynote speaker is Dr. Brooks from Simply Divine Communications, will share her knowledge of etiquette and its impact on everyday lives.

"We do a pretty good job, I think, of maintaining our system," Chadwell said. "But we need to get the message out there, to the students, the faculty and the staff as well."

Brooks is an author, motivational speaker and instructor at the University of North Texas. She has presented at the University of North Texas and in Europe and Japan. She will share her knowledge of etiquette and its impact on everyday lives.

"We do a pretty good job, I think, of maintaining our system," Chadwell said. "But we need to get the message out there, to the students, the faculty and the staff as well."