Connections
Preparring tomorrow’s professionals one student at a time

Calendar of Events

September 26
Effective Schools Project Conference

October 10
Effective Schools Project Conference

October 13
TExES/ExCET Test Administration

October 21–27
Homecoming Week

October 26–27
Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association Annual Meeting

November 1
Deadline for Early Applications for Ed.D. Program

November 2–3
Texas A&M University System Student Research Symposium

November 10
Texan Tour

November 22–24
Thanksgiving Holiday

December 8
TExES/ExCET Test Administration

December 13–17
Commencement Activities

Greeting from the Dean

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Connections, the College of Education newsletter.

Great things are happening, and we want to share some of the successes of our students, introduce new faculty and inform you of special events!

With a student enrollment of 2,600, the College of Education is now the largest college at Tarleton State University. The two largest undergraduate majors are interdisciplinary studies (720) and exercise and sports studies (613). The two largest graduate majors are educational administration (404) and curriculum and instruction (213). However, the quality of our academic programs is more important than their size. One measure of quality is the success of our students. We are very proud of our graduates and their accomplishments! College of Education graduates are recruited by employers and graduate schools and are well prepared to work in socially significant fields.

A change in the structure of the college occurred in the fall of 2006 when the three departments became four. The current academic units are curriculum and instruction, chaired by Dr. Ann Calahan; educational leadership and policy studies, chaired by Dr. Betty Jo Monk; health and physical education, chaired by Dr. Steve Crews; and psychology and counseling, chaired by Dr. Bob Newby.

I would also like to highlight two milestones for the college. In the spring, we celebrated the graduation of the first doctoral students in educational leadership, with four receiving diplomas. This is the first, and currently only, doctoral degree at Tarleton. Secondly, this year we are observing the 20th year of operation of the Effective Schools Project (ESP), one of the nation’s largest and longest-running public school improvement ventures. You can read more about our doctoral students and the ESP in this newsletter.

Thank you for the interest you have shown in the College of Education just by reading this newsletter. If you have questions or suggestions or if I can help in any way, please let me know.

—Jill Burk
First Doctoral Degrees in Tarleton History Awarded

For the first time in Tarleton’s 109-year history, doctoral degrees were awarded during the spring commencement ceremonies. Doctor of education diplomas were awarded May 4, to Cindy Edwards, Stephenville; Susan Humiston, Temple; Juanita Reyes, Cleburne; and Matt Stephen, Lake Worth.

The four doctoral recipients were part of a group of 15 students who made history in the fall of 2003 by being the first Tarleton students accepted into the university’s doctor of education program.

“It’s a significant step for Tarleton’s academic programs,” said Dr. Mark Littleton, the doctoral program’s director. “This milestone also represents a change in the focus of our educational leadership program. In the past, it has been focused primarily on teaching and service, but we have now moved toward a program that includes a significant research element.”

Littleton said the doctor of education program has already seen tremendous growth, growing from the 15 original students to 60. Thirteen students were added to the program this summer.

First-year candidates were selected based on a highly competitive process that looked for a strong leadership background or potential, excellent academic background or potential and a commitment to the time and effort required to complete the program. Less than half of those who applied for the doctoral program were accepted.

“We wanted a group of individuals who were committed to finishing what they start,” Littleton said.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved Tarleton’s doctor of education in April 2003.

The four-year curriculum allows electives to be taken at the Stephenville, Killeen or Fort Worth campuses. Doctoral-only courses will be offered in Stephenville, Waco and Fort Worth.
Curriculum and Instruction

Tarleton Announces Winners of Robert H. Elliott Memorial Award

Tarleton students Janet Bergeman, Brook Dyer, Brooklyn Christian and Kelly Richey were recently named the 2007 recipients of the Robert H. Elliott Memorial Award for student teaching.

The winners were announced at this year’s Reflections ceremony, which is presented through the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. The Elliott Award recognizes student teachers who distinguish themselves with outstanding qualities in the classroom.

Jan Bergeman, of Granbury, Texas, was chosen as the recipient of the Elliott Award that encompasses early childhood through fourth grade. Bergeman taught kindergarten and second grade at Granbury Independent School District.

Brook Dyer, of Highland Village, Texas, received the award for fourth through eighth grades. Dyer taught middle school math at Stephenville Jr. High.

Brooklyn Christian, of Stephenville, Texas, was chosen as the recipient for the eighth through 12th grades. Christian taught speech at Glen Rose High School.

Kelly Richey, of Granbury, was chosen as the all-level winner, which encompasses early childhood through 12th grade. Richey taught art at Acton Middle School and Brawner Intermediate School, both in Granbury.

The award’s namesake, Robert H. Elliott, taught in the education and psychology department from 1981 until his death in 1990. Friends of Elliott developed the award in memory of his enthusiasm and devotion to students.

Psychology and Counseling

Students Present Research Findings at International Convention

Tarleton students Julie Andaverde, Jeffie Sprague and Mona Whittington, along with sponsor, Dr. Thomas Dougherty, recently presented a paper at the Association for the Psychological Sciences (APS) annual convention held May 24-27 in Washington, D.C.

The research findings were the result of collaborative research conducted by Dougherty, who is a professor in the Department of Psychology and Counseling, and the students examining infant cognition.

Their paper, titled “Speed of Information Processing in Young Children,” discusses how age plays a role in the quickness and efficiency that children process information. The study, which began last summer, was funded by a university research grant.

Dougherty and his students evaluated the eye movements of three-month-old infants watching images on a computer screen. The infants’ eye movements were recorded and the reaction was measured. The same children were then evaluated at four years of age for intelligence.

The conclusion showed a distinct correlation between quickness of eye movements and intelligence.

The APS conference hosts member psychologists from all around the world including China, Japan, Europe and Russia.

“It is truly an honor for our students to present, and for Tarleton to be represented at such a conference,” Dougherty said.

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Tarleton Doctoral Student Named NFL Teacher of the Year

National Football League’s (NFL) 2006 Teacher of the Year was Karen Crow, a educational leadership and policy studies doctoral student at Tarleton. Crow is also the principal at A.G. Elder Elementary School in Joshua, Texas, and was nominated for the national award by Devon Harvey-Monsour, a fifth-grader and Katrina evacuee. She was notified of the award during a surprise assembly held at the school in January.

Devon wrote that life in Texas was much easier thanks to Crow’s efforts, which included making his family feel welcome and providing rides to school when the family did not have a car.

To nominate their teacher for the NFL’s teaching award, students were required to submit an essay on why their teacher should be considered. The contest was open to students between the ages of 6 and 14.

Crow received an all-expense-paid trip for two to the 2007 Pro Bowl and All-Star Game in Honolulu, Hawaii, and $500 in spending money. She was also honored on the gridiron before the game.

In addition, Devon’s favorite NFL player visited the school. A.G. Elder Elementary also received $500 to host a Super Bowl XLI party as well as a $5,000 grant to be used for any educational purpose as determined by the school.
Dr. Mark Weber
Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Weber received his master’s in education from Texas Christian University and his doctoral degree in education from the University of North Texas. He began his career as a junior high classroom teacher and coach for St. Paul Lutheran School in Fort Worth, and later entered secondary administration in the Keller ISD.

“I enjoyed each step of my professional career, but the teaching and research experience at Tarleton is proving to be the most enjoyable of all.”

Dr. Calvin Lawrence
Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Lawrence received his master’s degree from Texas Christian University and doctorate from Baylor University. His philosophy is that relationships are fundamental in elementary and higher education.

“First build relationships; then everything else happens.”

Dr. Tod Allen Farmer
Assistant Professor for the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Farmer received his master’s degree from Tarleton and doctorate from the University of North Texas. His previous roles have included elementary teacher, assistant principal and principal for an intermediate school and high school. At the central office level, he served as associate director of instructional technology and later as director of student services.

“Great things are happening at Tarleton and I feel very fortunate to be a small part of them.”

Dr. Jim Gentry
Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Gentry received his master’s degree from Texas A&M-Texarkana and doctorate from A&M-Commerce. “I enjoy Tarleton due to the friendly, open atmosphere at the university. Tarleton’s College of Education has an excellent reputation, and I am honored to come here to learn and contribute.”

Dr. Sue Erwin
Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Erwin received her master’s degree in special education and doctorate in curriculum and instruction at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Her previous experience included teaching in the public school system and the College of Education at Cameron University in Oklahoma.

“Tarleton’s College of Education is by far one of the best learning and teaching experiences I have had.”

Dr. Nancy Reynolds
Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Reynolds received her master’s degree from Illinois State University and doctorate from Baylor University. She began her career as a teacher in the public school system for 17 years. Later, she worked for Texas A&M–Corpus Christi teaching mostly graduate level courses in curriculum and instruction and various math education courses.

“I enjoyed my students in my previous job so much. I was so relieved when I started my job here and found that I equally enjoyed my Tarleton students. My students on the Stephenville campus and Killeen campus are the greatest!”

Dr. Kayla Peak
Assistant Professor in the Department of Health and Physical Education

Peak received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Tarleton and her doctoral degree from Texas A&M University–Commerce. She began her career at Texas A&M–Commerce, serving as director of campus recreation and as assistant athletic director.

“I love the atmosphere and spirit on campus. We have positive students who are eager to learn. I enjoy the fact that we are helping to prepare future educators – students who will go out into the world and hopefully have an impact on the health and wellness of our youth.”

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