



SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE
**FACULTY
SPOTLIGHT** 2012-2013







SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE FACULTY SPOTLIGHT 2012-2013

South Texas College, through the vision of the Board of Trustees, the support of our communities, and the commitment to excellence by the College's students, faculty, staff, and administration, celebrates 20 years of academic excellence!

The Division of Academic Affairs proudly celebrates and recognizes the entire faculty of South Texas College for their dedication to exemplary teaching and learning, and through the 2012-2013 edition of the *Faculty Spotlight*, highlights teachers who embody the values that the Division holds dear. We invite you to join us as we celebrate our legacy of service to our students and communities.

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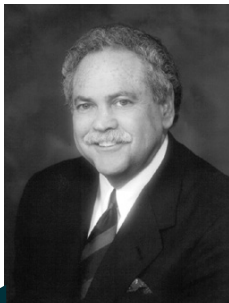


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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT
COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE:
Service to our College, our Community,
★★★★ and our Students ★★★★★



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JAIME GARCIA
MUSIC



Making a Difference through Music

As an artist and an educator Jaime Garcia constantly strives to improve himself, his studio, STC, and the community as a whole. Jaime Garcia began his own education at UTPA where he received both his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Guitar Performance. Incidentally, he was the first student to obtain his master's in guitar performance from the university. Afterwards, Jaime began working at STC as the director of the guitar studio in Fall 2009. He began with a handful of students and one guitar class; through his efforts it has grown to a full-fledged studio with multiple guitar classes. He now teaches applied guitar lessons, beginner guitar classes, and guitar ensemble. Due to popular demand, he is the first applied music instructor to offer an instrumental class on the Mid-Valley Campus, and the studio's guitar ensemble is frequently invited to perform for STC events and outside social events. His studio has expanded greatly in part due to his efforts in recruitment. Jaime regularly visits high schools across the Rio Grande Valley to perform, teach, and inform the students about the up-and-coming music department at STC. For the benefit of his students, he has invited internationally renowned artists to provide them with master classes. Jaime has organized several guest artist concerts at STC including Dr. Kurt Martinez and Dr. Mark Ramirez of UTPA

and Flavio Apro from the State University of Maringa in Brazil. Furthermore, he co-sponsored the Vive Vivaldi! orchestra concert in which he was a featured soloist.

He maintains an active performance schedule that includes regular performances at STC, UTPA, and the Lark Branch Library in addition to other local events. Recently, Jaime was also invited to perform as a guest artist at the annual UTPA Guitar Festival and Competition. Additionally, he is active as an adjudicator for every level of guitar competition. Jaime continues to study with world renowned artists through private lessons and workshops in various states and is currently studying with the great Italian guitarist Giulio Tampalini. To date 100% of Jaime's students completing their associate's degrees have been accepted into a bachelor's music program.

Aside from his pursuits as a teaching artist, Jaime has completed STC certifications for online teaching and faculty advising. In the past, he served as a faculty advisor for the Visual Arts and Music Club and is currently serving on the Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment (SLOA) Committee.



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KELLY PETERSON
CRIMINAL JUSTICE



Incorporating Emergency Response, Disaster, and Personal Preparedness Training into the Classroom

After completing his graduate Certificate in Homeland Security from Texas A&M University, Kelly Peterson noticed the focus in homeland security, at least on the undergraduate level, was shifting towards a dual focus of emergency response and personal preparedness rather than toward academic study. As a result, Kelly began incorporating online coursework into his courses in order to expose his students to the field of homeland security. Kelly includes various FEMA courses such as “National Response Framework,” “Introduction to the Incident Command System for Healthcare/Hospitals,” and “Active Shooter: What You Can Do.” With the increasing number of violent campus incidents, these courses are particularly pertinent. Kelly now has hundreds of students certified in one or more of the courses.

Perhaps the most important training Kelly incorporates into his classroom is the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) course. Kelly introduced CERT training to students through the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. This training is designed to train people in “needed lifesaving skills with emphasis on decision-making skills, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the

greatest number” (FEMA). Furthermore, the training is designed to organize teams that they may assist the first responders, offering immediate help should the need arise. Four CERT courses have been offered at the Mid-Valley Campus in the last couple of years, and now over 150 students are CERT certified.

Additionally, students regularly apply what they have learned at home and in the workplace. Often times these certifications are the deciding factor when students are seeking employment. Furthermore, the students enjoy utilizing the online training resources and experiencing a form of education not generally presented at the undergraduate level. Kelly exposes his students to training that law enforcement professionals, upper division students, and graduate students use on a daily basis. These students are given an opportunity to enhance their skills and see what their future employment and education will entail. Ultimately, the focus on personal preparedness is helpful in their daily lives. Learning first response practices is helpful not only in their education, but also in their current and future employment and in our community at large.



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ALEXANDRO SARABIA
PSYCHOLOGY



A Role Model for Students

Sometimes it is difficult for students to see how college classes will benefit them or how to take what they learn and apply it to their lives and their community. However, Psychology Instructor Alexandro Sarabia epitomizes student success and serves as a role model for his students. Originally from the Rio Grande Valley, Alex graduated from Roma High School in 2006 as Valedictorian of his class. Upon graduation he attended STC as a student where he participated in numerous STC and community service events such as the Valley Scholars and Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. Upon completion of his associate's, Alex attended and graduated from UTPA as the Top Graduate of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences where he obtained two bachelor's degrees in psychology and sociology. Shortly thereafter, Alex obtained his master's degree in clinical psychology from UTPA.

He has since returned to his alma mater to begin teaching as a Psychology Instructor at both the Starr County and Mid-Valley campuses. Alex is able to relate to his students and serve as a role model, as he attended STC both as a dual-enrollment and later as a traditional student. Now Alex is actively involved in student life as he is the co-advisor of the Starr County Campus Psychology Club. With this club, Alex has planned, organized, and hosted four Starr County Role Models Get Inspired conferences, three Starr County Got Talent shows, and a Meet the STC and UTPA Presidents conference. He is currently planning a Starr County Mental Health Conference to take place in the fall of 2013. Moreover, Alex takes his students and psychology club members to numerous community services events every semester, including the fall festivals at STC,

Relay for Life, Christmas Parade, Candle Light Vigils, highway trash pick-ups, Art Walks, RGC Chamber of Commerce Events, RGC Boys & Girls Club, 5k races for good causes, and mental health courses.

Alex has also hosted over 100 student success workshops open to all STC students (at Starr County and Mid-Valley Campuses) on topics such as Time Management, Stress Management, Anger Management, Overcoming Test Anxiety, Recovering from Academic Setbacks, Goal Setting, and Assertiveness Training since 2009. The average student attendance per workshop is between 25-30 students. In fact, on some occasions, 50-60 students have attended one single workshop. Alex has also presented such workshops to special groups of students, such as CLE tutors at Starr County and Mid-Valley Campuses, EMT students, nursing students, and high school-dual enrollment students via DEMSA, Gear UP, and Upward Bound for the past four years. He has hosted some of these workshops for Edinburg High School students (April 2012) and children who attended Life Camp at Renaissance during the summer of 2012.

Yet, not only is Alex dedicated to STC and its students, but he is also generously committed to the community at large. For instance, he has seen patients for therapy, free of charge, at Abundant Grace Counseling Center since January 2012. Aside from that, Alex has provided individual, group, and family psychotherapy to children, adolescents, adults, and geriatrics at Doctors Hospital at Renaissance Behavioral Center.



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CESAR GARCIA
VOCATIONAL NURSING



Attaining Excellence through Simulation

Founding STC Faculty Member, Cesar E. Garcia started teaching part time in the Emergency Medical Technology (EMT) Program for the McAllen branch of Texas State Technical Institute (TSTI) in 1991. Shortly thereafter, he became the founding Chair of the EMT program at Texas State Technical College in 1992 and also in the transition to South Texas Community College in 1993. The EMT AAS degree was one of the first Associate Degrees that allowed STCC to gain its own independent accreditation. Cesar continued to be the chair of the EMT program and was able to secure various donations, including two ambulances donated by HCA Rio Grande Regional and MedCare Ambulance. He was also able to secure the purchase of an ambulance simulator and a brand new ambulance using the Houston-Galveston Area Council purchasing process which allows the governmental procurement process to be more efficient by establishing competitively priced contracts for goods and services including emergency and general use vehicles.

Cesar was also always willing to take on new and innovative projects to help his students. For instance, Cesar was the first to use medical simulation to teach his students using the Laerdal Simman, and he was instrumental in securing both third generation

mannequins and video equipment to make simulation realistic and useful for students. He spearheaded the simulation project, and now all nursing programs and most nursing faculty incorporate simulation, utilizing it every day to help teach critical concepts to their students. STC now has simulation labs on each of the three main campuses: NAH, Mid-Valley, and Starr County.

Cesar's career at STC was epitomized by his hard work and dedication as exemplified by his receipt of two Jaguar awards and his years of service as a faculty senator for NAH. He also served as a volunteer firefighter and rescue captain for the City of Mission from 2000-2005. In 2008, Cesar was awarded a sabbatical to complete his BSN degree after which he returned to be a faculty member of the Vocational Nursing (VN) program. He served as assistant chair for the VN program while also completing his Master of Science in Nursing Degree (MSN) in Administration from the University of Texas at Brownsville. In essence Cesar Garcia was a model faculty member and his commitment to student success and teaching excellence was second to none. He leaves a huge void at STC and will be greatly missed.



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DIANE TETER
BIOLOGY

Designing Online Biology Courses for Texas Community Colleges

In late 2010, the Virtual College of Texas (VCT) and the Texas Community College Teachers Association (TCCTA) partnered with the Dallas County Community College District LeCroy Center to improve distance education, making it more effective and accessible. As one of the leading biology instructors in the state, Associate Professor Diane Teter, representing South Texas and STC, was one of the few faculty invited to serve on the advisory council for a two-year period. The project focused on developing a high-end, completely online, four-hour biology course with a lab component for non-majors. Diane was instrumental in both the design and implementation of the course.

Having taught biology since 1995 at STC, Diane developed course material with a consortium of biology faculty invited to participate in authoring and evaluating the course material. The course was designed using the SoftChalk platform and was compatible with our Blackboard Delivery system. Diane worked closely with the other faculty advisers to write chapters and design activities using Softchalk that would correspond to the assigned chapters and determine which labs and lab kits would be most appropriate for the online forum. In early 2012, there was an initial pilot run of the course deliverability at several colleges to check its effectiveness and in the fall semester of 2012, Diane began piloting the course in her own online classes. Now the course is available for use by all community colleges in Texas.

In Diane's current general biology course, she also includes discussion questions to enhance student learning as well as group discussions, using YouTube videos on biology topics. Each semester, Diane holds an on-campus orientation for students to learn or review Bb delivery and learn the course navigation particular to the delivery method of instruction. As a result of her commitment to excellence in distance education, Diane received the Distinguished Teaching and Learning Award in 2010 for her technique of "Utilization of Video with Regard to Online Teaching." She is a current member of Texas Distance Learning Association and has served as the biology sessions chair for the Texas Community College Teachers Association (TCCTA). In 2013, Diane will have achieved 10 years of distance education instructional delivery at eSTC.

Additionally, Diane served as STC Faculty Senator in 2012-13 and was voted Secretary of the Faculty Senate in 2013. She has been a member of the STC Professional Development Committee and the STC Sick Leave Pool Committee. Diane currently is a member of the International Women's Board at UTPA and participated on the scholarship committee for its 2013 awards for international educational travel. Along with her husband, she is a member of the UTPA Heritage Society. As an innovator and educator, Diane is committed to improving student learning and providing students additional opportunities to learn and grow.

DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AND LEARNING AWARDS

The Distinguished Teaching and Learning Award (DTLA) was established to recognize full-time or part-time faculty members who have established an exemplary teaching technique, practice, or activity at South Texas College.



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JOSEPH ARCHER
EMERGENCY MEDICAL
TECHNOLOGY



Using Community Events as Teaching Tools

In 1994, Joseph Archer started the EMT program as a student. Shortly thereafter, Joseph graduated from South Texas College in 1995 with an Associate in Applied Science in Emergency Medical Technology and from the University of Texas Pan American in 2003 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor in Chemistry. In 2005, he began instructing at STC as a lab assistant and eventually became an EMT instructor. In addition to teaching at the college, Joseph is currently studying to become a Medical Doctor at Universidad Valle del Bravo, Facultad de Medicina. Yet, Joseph is constantly looking for ways to involve his EMT students in community activities and events. Through these extra activities, the knowledge from the textbook comes to life and gives the EMT students a more well-rounded education to what they will be facing as medics. These activities and events also help promote the EMT Program and the Nursing and Allied Health Campus in general. In the past, he has been instrumental in coordinating the department to participate in such events and career fairs.

For instance, when the Harvest of Health event was announced, Joseph went into action and was responsible for all the ground displays that included several Emergency Medical Services companies, the National Guard, the local Air Evac Helicopter Service, and games with prizes to entertain the children. In addition, he spearheaded a project for the children of Joplin, Missouri who had been involved in the massive tornado that destroyed the town. When Channel 5 was collecting school supplies to send to Joplin, Joseph and his students collected donations. They successfully filled the ambulance and delivered it to the Channel 5 TV station. Moreover, Joseph actively scheduled a training demonstration by Air Evac for our students and helped plan the High Angle Rescue demonstration that included the EMT students and McAllen Firefighters working together in a scenario that demonstrated the skills required to rescue a patient. Due to his diligent work with community activities and events, Joseph has helped produce well-rounded individuals that will be of value to the community.



**VERONICA E.
DOMINGUEZ**
MATHEMATICS

A Learner-Centered Approach to the Preparation of Elementary Mathematics Pre-Service Teachers

In 2006, Veronica Dominguez accepted the position of Mathematics Instructor at South Texas College with the hope of inspiring and educating the people of Hidalgo County. Since then, she has taught College Algebra, Elementary Statistics, Pre-Calculus, and Fundamentals of Mathematics I and II. She has participated in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act grant (CCRAA), Teaching Circles Grant, and the Complete College of America Grant in conjunction with Texas State University (CCA-FOCUS), all of which have attributed to her growth as an educator. She has also served on the technology committee, textbook selection committee, and the mathematics retreat committee, as well as participated in the New Faculty Academy and Retreat.

As a teacher, one of Veronica's goals is to educate pre-service teachers in the learner-centered style of Mathematics Education. She has had the privilege of doing so through the two mathematics education courses offered at STC. Fundamentals of Mathematics I and II are courses required of students who are entering the field of Education. Research shows that teachers teach the way they were taught (Britzman, 1991; Lortie, 1975). Unfortunately, many of our students were not taught using the learner-centered approach to mathematics. To address this issue, Veronica creates a learner-centered environment while encouraging faculty-student engagement. She uses hands-on and concrete models to teach

mathematics concepts. She models how, as future elementary teachers, they need to help their students transition from concrete examples to abstract mathematical concepts and problems. After placing the students in cooperative learning groups using different mathematics education techniques, Veronica walks around to facilitate the learning. She gives the students an opportunity to see what teaching excellence is, in hopes that it will transfer to their future classrooms.

Some of the activities used to model a learner-centered classroom include students using pattern blocks to answer questions about fractions and using cubes to generate base ten and other base arithmetic problems. In addition, students use base ten blocks to model subtraction with regrouping. She also incorporates other activities using fraction strips, egg cartons, dice, and educational games. Furthermore, the students communicate with her through a reflective journal where they comment about the day's lesson, activities, and lecture. In the journal entry that is attached, the student provides insight as to how the activity has helped him/her understand fractions. Veronica dedicates numerous hours creating and implementing the activities and exams. She works diligently to help her students succeed and to hopefully inspire their own students someday.



**MAHMOUD A.
GASSEM**
PHYSICAL SCIENCE



Teaching Advanced Critical Thinking Skills through the Development of Technically Complex Practical Devices

Mahmoud Gassem started teaching at the college more than twelve years ago. He holds a Master of Science in physics from the University of Mississippi and has completed several master's level courses in mechanical engineering. Since joining the college, Mahmoud completed a doctorate degree in Theoretical Particle Physics from the American University in London, UK. He used to commute to Pennsylvania to meet with his thesis advisor on a monthly basis, and as a result, he successfully defended his thesis in 2008.

At STC, Mahmoud has taught almost all the courses offered by the Physics and Engineering department such as Physical Sciences, College and University Physics, and Engineering Dynamics and Statics. Mahmoud also routinely takes part in many college events such as the Annual Science Olympiad and the demonstration of Astronomical Globe to local schools. He has actively conducted Engineering Club meetings for the past decade.

In the classroom, Mahmoud employs an innovative teaching technique in which students use critical thinking skills to develop real-world solutions through invention and construction of practical devices. Mahmoud leads a team of students through the project developmental cycle, where they first recognize a need, do proper research and planning to meet that need, and then design and finally build a working prototype. In past projects, students have built many types of locomotives such as a "hover-crafts" capable

of tackling both dry and wet terrains and carrying a person over a mile. Several students built drag racers using 4HP lawn mower motors. Some other projects were a remotely controlled self-erasing whiteboard and a hydraulic robotic arm capable of lifting several hundred pounds. These are no ordinary tasks for second-year college students taking a University Physics course with its own rigorous curriculum that requires many hours outside of the class time.

This technique is a great example to show students how to apply their knowledge to build and use technology. Mahmoud's students often describe his teaching style as "awesome" or "super." He motivates students to the point where they commit hundreds of hours of their personal time to build something practical. No serious student of his is ever disappointed in taking this course and usually exhibits a sense of pride and accomplishment even if it means a few sleepless nights. He uses a traditional but powerful technique of group learning, where small teams are challenged to solve theoretical and experimental problems. Students are often asked to work out a solution on the whiteboard in front of class. He further captures students' attention by showing hands-on demonstrations of physical concepts and uses technology, multimedia, and internet to research and illustrate those examples. Through these projects, Mahmoud challenges and stimulates his students that they may have the confidence to change the world around them.



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MARTIN KNECHT
PHYSICS

Learning about Science and Engineering through NASA Space Exploration Projects

Having taught at the college for more than 12 years, Martin Knecht holds a Master of Science in physics from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He recently completed another master's in mechanical engineering from UTPA, and his thesis research centered on Micro Mechanical Sensors (MMS). He has taught all the courses offered by the department such as Physical Sciences, College Physics, University Physics, Engineering Statics and Dynamics, and new courses in Astronomy that he developed.

Martin has been an active member of several important committees at the college such as the Faculty Senate, and the faculty search committees, and science lab development committees. Martin is also a regular contributor in both community and college activities such as the Science Olympiad, Engineering Olympiad, and STEM support for local underprivileged schools. Additionally, he frequently hosts Astronomical events at night – both on campus and at the McAllen Science Museum – where individuals may view the constellations through a STC owned QUASAR telescope.

In teaching, Martin knows that all of science and engineering is based upon critical thinking and solving practical daily life problems which can often be boring. Sometimes to motivate students into

science one has to charm them with extraordinary quests, such as Space Explorations. Thus, Martin physically takes the students to the NASA Space Center in Houston, TX. There they learn firsthand what scientists do and how they explore outer Space. Martin has been taking students there for the past eight years. NASA has some great apprenticeship programs where students studying science can work on actual NASA projects with scientists and engineers. Martin also excites his students through Sky telescopes when teaching Astronomy. These are very unique and innovative techniques to capture a young mind's attention.

Additionally, Martin has developed numerous meticulous labs in Physical Science, Physics, and Engineering and has painstakingly carried out measurements with his students. He recently developed several STEM-based course teaching techniques in collaboration with UTPA which emphasize critical thinking by way of a hands-on approach to solving complex engineering problems. Students are taken to the field where they perform actual measurements on site. Based on those measurements, they refine their initially crude model and extract a more accurate prediction of results. Hence, students are actively involved in learning.



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PATTIE PARKER
ENGLISH



The “American Dream” Today

Pattie J. Parker began work with the English Department of South Texas College as a Dual Enrollment instructor in Fall 2010. Pattie has been an intern in the STC Summer Leadership Institute, a member of the RGV Pathways Committee and the STC College Readiness Academy, as well as a sponsor for the Sharyland S.T.O.R.M. Club. She participated in the Sharyland Technology Showcase in Fall 2011 with an exhibit entitled “Wordpress: Blogging in School.” Additionally, she assisted Dr. Wallace Johnson, STC College Readiness Liaison, at the NISOD Conference with a presentation entitled “The Best of Both Worlds: Bridging the Instructional Gaps between Secondary and Post-Secondary Education.”

In her teaching, Pattie promotes a rigorous agenda, a collegiate atmosphere of responsibility, and higher order thinking process through various means, including her teaching project with the theme of “the American Dream.” Students were to assess what their own version of “the Dream” was and whether this dream was upheld by their peers, parents, and the rest of society. Students then utilized various media mediums to express themselves in a collaborative presentation. The project results included student involvement, expression, and creativity: all higher order skills that will help students move confidently toward becoming lifelong learners in any field they choose.



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LAURA SALAS
COMPUTER AIDED
DRAFTING & DESIGN

Teaching Design and Drafting using Sketchcharrette

Having joined the South Texas College Computer Aided Drafting & Design (CADD) program in 2001, Laura Salas's teaching disciplines include architectural drafting, civil drafting, design, and technical graphics (digital imaging). She has taught various classes from architectural illustration and graphic design to topographical drafting. Additionally, Laura is extremely active in the STC community as well as the overall community in the Rio Grande Valley. For instance, she has showcased several exhibits at STC, such as "Architectural Expressions" in 2009 at the STC Starr County Campus library.

Laura is always looking for new ways to engage students in the classroom. After attending the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) American Institute of Architects' 1st Sketchcharrette in downtown McAllen in the fall of 2005, Laura was inspired to bring this project idea to South Texas College. Sketchcharrette is a creative, competitive event that brings awareness to the field of architecture and exposure to local firms, school programs, and the community. Groups enter the event and are required to select a client. In a controlled environment, the group is asked to design a project based on the creative design and specific objectives. The students actively learn to produce an artistic or functional model from ideas they sketch and out of materials they have to test and research.

With the support of the originator (the LRGV AIA), Laura

incorporated this Sketchcharrette event into her Spring 2006 architectural illustration class with some minor adjustments to accommodate STC students and the course learning outcomes. After positive feedback and outcomes, the project evolved the next semester into pumpkin designs. Laura had CADD program students carving great architecture buildings and features on pumpkins while learning about architecture, illustration techniques, and collaborations – all through a hands-on approach.

Since the event/assignment was such a great hit in her classes, Laura went further. In 2007, Laura, in conjunction with the CADD department faculty, held STC's first official mini Sketchcharrette competition. In 2008, STC's 2nd Sketchcharrette was opened to include high school students, along-side our college students. Students even had the opportunity to compete with professional engineers and architects.

The Sketchcharrette transformed and evolved to make it a successful, annual event. Additionally, she has since added "Barkitecture" which involved STC students creating and designing dog houses. The dog houses were then auctioned off and proceeds were given to local animal shelters. Through these unique assignments and competitions, students learn through a practical hands-on approach which requires them to brainstorm, research, investigate, plan, and test their thoughtful ideas.



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ELVIE TREVIÑO
COLLEGE SUCCESS



Teaching Critical Thinking Skills through Agree/Disagree Activities

Elvie Treviño started with the College Success Department of South Texas College as an adjunct instructor in 2007 and became a full time instructor in the fall of 2008. She was awarded the Distinguished Teaching and Learning Award in 2009 for “Life Management: Believe in Yourself and You Will Achieve Your Goals.” Last year, Elvie served on the Cohort Success Initiative-Faculty Initiative Team (CSI-FIT) where she developed and monitored activities to increase student comfort in her classrooms. The theory was that as comfort increased, student participation would increase as well, and the theory proved to be true.

In the classroom, Elvie presents topics and asks the students to decide if they agree or disagree. The students then literally “stand for what they believe” by standing along the wall, indicating the degree of agreement or disagreement from strongly agree to agree or to the other side of the room—strongly disagree or disagree.

Moreover, the students are not allowed to “sit on the fence,” as she calls it. The student has to make a decision based on their knowledge of the statement and has to be willing to show where they stand even when some students try to convince them otherwise. Topics range from instructor’s responsibilities to views about mixed marriages, political differences, and values such as honesty, commitment, and responsible decision-making.

Afterwards, Elvie asks individual students to state reasons why they took the stance they did while everyone else listens. If a student hears new information or a new way of looking at the issue, the student has the right to move to a different degree. A student can move clear across the room indicating a total change of opinion based on new information. Students are asked to always value and respect their own opinions as well as those of other students. Through these activities, Elvie aims to teach her students respect and a greater awareness of the world around them.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DANIEL TYX
ENGLISH

Creating a Classroom Blogosphere

Daniel Tyx began work with the English Department of South Texas College in 2010. Since then Daniel has had a Poster Session entitled “Making Research Matter: Connecting the Social and the Personal” at the 2011 National Council of English Teachers Conference. He has also published essays in the *Gettysburg Review* and the *Gulf Coast* magazines and had fiction published in *Along the River: An Anthology of Voices from the Rio Grande Valley*. Recently, Daniel’s essay, “The Year I Didn’t,” originally published in *Gulf Coast*, was selected for the *Best American Travel Writing series*.

As an instructor, Daniel works diligently to engage his students and immerse them in the literature they are reading. For instance, in his literature classes, Daniel asks his students to create a personalized “lit blog,” using a free blogging platform, which allows them to

participate in an online literary community outside of the walls of the class. The blog allows the students the opportunity to respond informally to the texts being read in class, as well as to read and respond to the thoughts of their peers. The blog platform also allows them to include links, images, videos, and polls, and to personalize the site’s “look” to reflect their own interests and aesthetics. It also invites them to join in a wider literary community, since through this project they begin to discover the wealth of literature resources that are available through the World Wide Web. Daniel finds that students often use the blog as a study tool as they prepare for exams and reference each other’s posts during the in-class discussions. Thus, they are more engaged and prepared for the discussions.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PABLO CORTEZ
DEVELOPMENTAL
MATHEMATICS



e-Faculty of the Year

When it comes to teaching online, Mathematics Instructor Pablo Cortez is truly an outstanding educator. Thus, at the Fall 2012 Distance Education Symposium, Pablo was named as this year's E-faculty of the year. Pablo comes from a migrant family of twelve and is originally from Sebastian, Texas. Unsure of what career path to take, Pablo obtained a Bachelor in Mathematics and minored in Computer Science at St. Edward's University in Austin in 1996. Shortly thereafter, he obtained his master's in mathematics from Texas A&M University – College Station in 1999. While there, he really enjoyed working as a teaching assistant for undergraduate math courses and realized he would like to pursue a career in education. Upon graduation, Pablo returned to Rio Grande Valley and was hired in the Developmental Math Department in 1999.

Since then Pablo has been teaching online courses for six years. He knows that mathematics is one of the most difficult subjects to learn online and can be quite intimidating to many students. Dr. Brett Millan, former Associate Dean of Distance Learning, identified Pablo as an "incredible communicator." He states that Pablo excels at "making himself available online and also having face-to-face sessions to help the students succeed." Pablo does indeed strive to be in constant communication with his students and to be available that they may not get discouraged or fall behind. He begins each semester with a video introduction so students learn a little about

him and he asks that the students give him a little information about themselves. Furthermore, Pablo gives out his personal cell phone number that students may contact him if they have any questions or concerns. He also has a twitter account for each of his courses, online and traditional. He encourages his students to follow him so that he can quickly get messages to them regarding due dates for upcoming assignments or quizzes.

Additionally, Pablo believes that course layout is extremely important, as students must be able to easily maneuver through the course and follow each lesson. Each week he begins with a new module showing the tasks that need to be completed for the week. At minimum, each module consists of notes for the new lesson, video solutions to every problem in the notes so students can see how the problems are explained in the traditional classroom, and assignments based on the notes. Other tasks vary by week and typically include quizzes and journal entries about a variety of topics such as brain teasers and logic, course improvement suggestions, house bills and legislation, or short stories. Finally, toward the end of the semester, Pablo also provides students with final exam and Accuplacer review videos that he may help ease their test anxiety. As an online faculty member, Pablo requires proctored exams for all online students. He hopes to protect the integrity of the course and maintain the same level of rigor as traditional courses.

By remaining in constant contact with his students, providing a clear, organized structure to the online courses, and maintaining the integrity of the exams, Pablo fosters an environment where student success is not only expected, but also preserved.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD) EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Since its inception in 1978, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) has emphasized the importance of teaching and leadership excellence in institutions of higher education. NISOD has worked to serve, engage, and inspire teachers and leaders through their conferences, publications, web services, partnerships, programs, and more. In 1989, in connection with a University of Texas national study of teaching excellence, NISOD hosted its first ceremony, held in conjunction with the annual International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence, honoring and naming the individuals featured in this study as recipients of the NISOD Excellence Award. Through the Excellence Award, NISOD is able to honor so many of the world's best in higher education.

This year we asked our NISOD award recipients how they feel they make a difference in the lives of our students, as well as what they hope our students will take away from their time at STC.

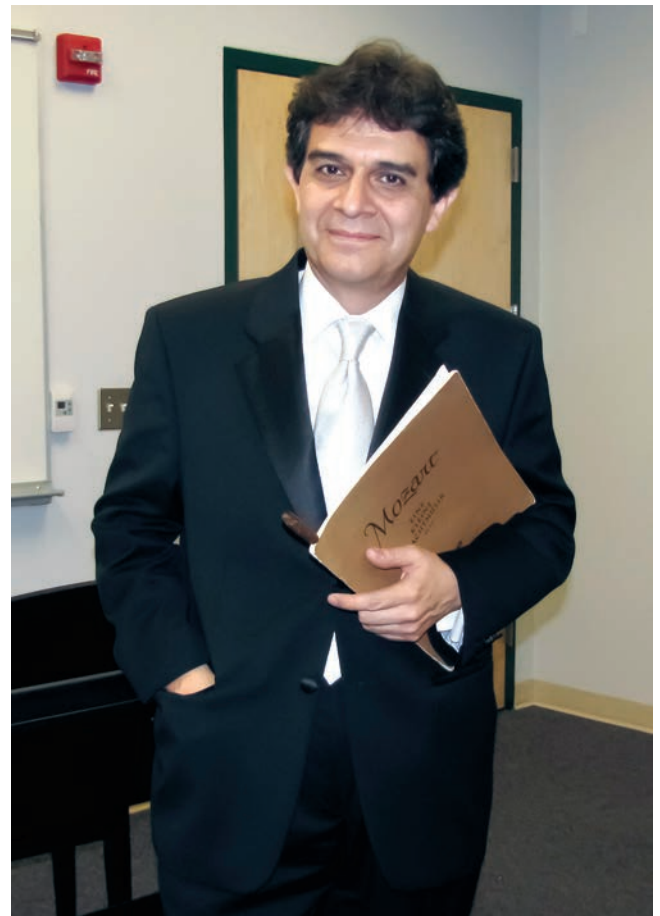


DR. MARIANO ALFRED URETA ACEVEDO ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING

Dr. Mariano Acevedo started his nursing career in the Philippines where he earned his bachelor's in nursing in 1992 from West Visayas State University. He received his professional nursing license the same year and eventually his midwifery professional license. Before migrating with his family to the United States, he was a clinical instructor for seven years and a CGFNS and NCLEX Examination lecturer and Review Director of Advanced Review Center for Nurses Inc. He was also once the Provincial Project Coordinator of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) fifth Country Program of Assistance in the Philippines. He later joined STC in 2007. Currently, Dr. Acevedo is President-elect of the Philippine Nurses Association of South Texas Rio Grande Valley. He earned his Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management in April 2010 from Aklan State University, and he is working on his second doctoral degree in Nursing Practice in Executive Leadership. Dr. Acevedo "ardently hopes that after earning their degrees here at STC, the students would go back and serve the community. Knowing the immensity of the health care need of the area that STC serves, our graduates will be highly instrumental in filling in the gaps and healthcare needs of our community."

WILLIAM BUHIDAR MUSIC

William Buhidar is the current Chair of the Visual Arts and Music Department for South Texas College. He brings years of experience as a professional music conductor having conducted a wide spectrum of music that includes symphonic and chamber orchestra concerts, complete dramatic opera and ballet productions, choral programs, and a wide variety of "pops" concerts. His work has been broadcast on National Public Radio's Performance Today, and he has appeared with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Lima Symphony Orchestra, Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra, and Royal Palais Orchestra. In addition to his work as a youth orchestra clinician and All-Region Orchestra guest conductor, William is the Music Director/Conductor of the OPUS Chamber Orchestra. As an educator William strives to be a role model for his students as he believes, "Our legacy, after all, is not found in the buildings we erect, the great art we create, or the great speeches we write. Our legacy will be found in the great people our students become through our influence as teachers and mentors."





RAQUEL DE GUZMAN ESGUERRA ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING

Raquel De Guzman Esguerra earned both her bachelor's and master's in nursing from Angeles University Foundation, Angeles City, Philippines. Upon graduating, she moved to the United States when she began practicing nursing in East Texas. In 2006, she joined STC's Associate Degree Nursing Program where she has worked as a level one nursing skills and clinical instructor. Since 2007, her assignment has expanded to include classroom and clinical instruction in level four Advanced Medical Surgical Nursing and Preceptorship.

Raquel takes great pride in being part of a great team of administrators, faculty, and staff. She is also currently serving the community through a church's children ministry. Raquel hopes "each student will bring with them the core values of commitment to excellence, integrity, life-long learning, and service to the community." It is her deepest desire to see each student be empowered and equipped to run with the vision and see its fulfillment. She hopes that the successes her students have attained in attending the prestigious institution of South Texas College will encourage them to give back to their own communities in the same way that the college community has given them the opportunity to be successful.

ROGELIO ESCANAME CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Rogelio "Roy" Escaname was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley and graduated from Pharr-San Juan-Alamo High School. He received both his bachelor's and master's in criminal justice from the University of Texas-Pan American. Roy was a DPS trooper, investigator, and supervisor with the Texas Department of Public Safety before retiring after almost 30 years of state service. He has received both the Faculty Excellence Award (2008) and the E-Faculty of the Year for 2009-2010. Additionally, in November 2011, he was awarded the Jaguar Excellence Award. Currently Roy serves as the advisor to the Pecan Campus Criminal Justice Club and Mentor Coordinator for the Puente program. In teaching, Roy sees the students transform from having minimal knowledge about the criminal justice system to having a full understanding of it. His message to each student is to obtain an education, get involved, and become leaders of the community. Roy explains, "Getting a job is great but getting an education and being involved in the community will make their lives fulfilling." As an STC faculty member, he hopes that the students will take his message to heart and create a better world for all of us.





MARIA ELENA GALVAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT
AND CLINICAL COORDINATOR

Prior to joining STC in 1999, Maria Elena Galvan worked as an occupational therapist in McAllen, TX. Maria has over twenty years of experience in the field, having worked as the Assistant Director of the Rehabilitation Department at McAllen Medical and as the Early Childhood Intervention Coordinator at the Tropical Texas Center for MH/MR. At the time Maria was also the chair of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Community Advisory Committee, and thus she assisted the founding Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program Director with input during the initial national accreditation process. With her interest and desire to assist in the implementation of the program, she was asked to join STC and the OTA program. Maria quickly fell in love with teaching and continues to work to help every student succeed, as she recognizes the many sacrifices some students must make in order to attend school. She hopes that “the students will always be passionate about what they learn and about what they do in their profession. In doing so, they will be able to help their patients in a most profound way.”

JON HERRIN ENGLISH

Jon Herrin grew up on the island nation of Grenada in the southern Caribbean and came to the US to attend college. With a bachelor’s degree and three master’s degrees, Jon has taught English, education, theology, and philosophy at colleges, universities, and seminaries in Georgia, Texas, Michigan, Venezuela, and Mexico. He joined STC (for a second time) in August 2011 where he has taught for the English and Developmental English departments and serves through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. Jon is married to Jeanne Herrin, an instructor in STC’s Continuing Education program, and they have three children. As an instructor, Jon has two primary tasks when he enters a classroom. Jon says he must make learning interesting and relevant as well as recognize the importance and worth of each student in the classroom. As an educator, Jon facilitates learning by fully engaging his students through lively lectures, interesting readings, animated and open discussions, and pertinent assignments. As a humanist he strives to help his students to find their “intrinsic worth as people and to discover the value of their voices in the great educational conversation.” He hopes that each student leaves STC full of competence and confidence.





SANDRA LEDESMA EDUCATION

Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, “Never look down on a man unless you are helping him up.” These words have had a lasting impact on Sandra Ledesma. Like many of our students, Sandra grew up as a migrant worker, traveling to various farms and picking every type of vegetable. While Sandra grew up in a low-income household, she never felt poor. Even though neither of her parents had graduated high school, Sandra was determined to better herself against the odds. After receiving her GED when she was only 16, Sandra was the first in her family to attend and graduate from college with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Government and later a Master of Arts in Secondary and Adult Education. She is currently pending her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. While Sandra has experienced many obstacles along the way, she has never given up on her goals and has maintained humility throughout. She hopes that others who experience similar struggles will stay strong and learn that the successes are all worth it. She hopes that her students will also take Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words to heart and “never look down on a man” unless they are helping the person up.

VIRGINIA ALLEGRA VILLARREAL-DISRAELI ENGLISH

Allegra Villarreal Disraeli currently teaches and resides in Rio Grande City, Texas. She was born in Detroit but raised in California, Oregon, and Texas. As the daughter of a progressive teacher, she was exposed to many different learning environments, including: private and public schooling, homeschooling, “unschooling,” Rudolf Steiner, and Montessori. At the age of 16, she received her GED, and enrolled at Portland Community College. A year and a half later, she was accepted at the University of St. Andrews, in Scotland, where she would earn Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Middle Eastern Studies. After graduating, she enrolled at Oxford University, shifted her academic focus, and was awarded a Master of Arts in Creative Writing in 2008. She taught ESL in Mexico and the Czech Republic before returning to the U.S. Once back in the Pacific Northwest, she began teaching English at three local community colleges. She now teaches at the Starr County Campus of STC, living in the same small, border town her maternal family has lived in for generations. In her free time, she enjoys oil painting, reading, and travelling whenever the opportunity arises.





DR. BENJAMIN MARK ALLEN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Dr. Benjamin Mark Allen earned his Ph.D. in Early Modern Transatlantic History from the University of Texas in Arlington in 2008. Since then he has published one monograph (*Naked and Alone in a Strange New World: Early Modern Captivity and Its Mythos*) and two edited works with Cambridge Scholars Publishing in the UK. Dr. Allen has also served as the Area Chair of Captivity Studies at Southwest Popular Culture and American Culture Association since 2008 and has been awarded two National Endowment for the Humanities study grants. Additionally, he assisted in a minor capacity on a doctoral dissertation committee at the Université de Haute Alsace, France. Currently Dr. Allen is engaged in research for another monograph regarding French captives in Texas during the 1680s and is writing a journal article about Thomas Jefferson's racial philosophy. At the college, he is serving as chair of the Common Reading Program that will launch in Fall 2013.



PATRICIA BALLINGER ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ART

Patricia Ballinger completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. She also had the opportunity to complete two years of studio instruction in Sculpture and Stained Glass through Artes Plasticas del Seguro Social in Mexico City, Mexico. Additionally, she acquired her Master of Arts in Museum Studies and Art History at the University of Denver. Furthermore, Patricia has had the opportunity to work in various professional positions within the Arts: Creative Director for Helena Rubenstein in Mexico City, Curatorial Assistant for the Anschutz Collection in Denver, Exhibit Curator for Onondaga Historical Museum in Syracuse, N.Y., Exhibit Director for International Museum of Art and Science, Gallery Director for the University of Texas – Pan American, and online facilitator for the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. Patricia joined the college as an adjunct in 1989 and began full-time employment in the arts in 2008. Since becoming part of the STC family, she has been involved in the Faculty Professional Development Team, the Common Reading Program, and the Educational Resource Committee.



DR. JAMES B. BARRERA ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Dr. James B. Barrera earned his Bachelor of Arts in History from Texas A&M University in College Station, his Master of Arts in U.S.-Mexico Border History from the University of Texas-EI Paso, and his Ph.D. in History from the University of New Mexico with an emphasis on Modern U.S. and American West History. He is a native of McAllen, Texas, who moved back to his hometown to begin a career in teaching at STC in 2005. The courses he teaches include U.S. History, Mexican American History, Texas History, and History Academic Cooperative. From 2005-2011, Dr. Barrera served as the faculty advisor for the STC Methodist Student Organization and currently advises the STC History Club at the Pecan Campus. Throughout the past eight years, Dr. Barrera has published five articles in academic journals and has a forthcoming book entitled, "We Want Better Education!": *The Mexican American Student Movement for Educational Reform in South Texas, 1968-1970*. As the lead instructor of the History Academic Cooperative course, he maintains the partnership between South Texas College and the Museum of South Texas History in Edinburg to offer history majors the opportunity to gain real-life work experience and to explore how service to the community relates to actual employment opportunities. He applied and received the ranking of Associate Professor in order to underscore his commitment to college service, professional activity, and student learning at STC.



DR. JANENE LOIS ISRAEL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

Dr. Janene Israel received her master's degree from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia and her Ph.D. in Psychology from Northcentral University in Prescott Valley, Arizona. She has been teaching in higher education for the past ten years with a post-doctoral specialization in Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health. Dr. Israel has had a clinical practice with a specialty in trauma based disorders for the past 20 years. In her first year at STC, she received the honor of being named Faculty of the Year. Currently, she serves as a LASS Senator on the Faculty Senate. Additionally, she founded and oversees the STC Pre- and Perinatal Center-Quiet Room and speaks extensively in the community about pre- and perinatal mental health issues. Her service to the community also includes her role as advisory committee member for surrounding school districts and hospitals, and as chair for both the March of Dimes Program Services Committee for the Rio Grande Valley and Post-Partum Support International.



LARRY MCELVAIN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Larry McElvain joined the STC faculty in 2009. Prior to joining STC, he taught Political Science at Front Range Community College. Larry obtained his Bachelor of Arts in Central and East European Studies from the University of Colorado, Boulder and his Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of New Mexico.



CHRISTOPHER R. MARSHALL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Christopher Marshall earned a Bachelor of Science in Political Science at the University of Utah, a Juris Doctor degree at Brigham Young University, and a Master of Arts in Political Science at Western Illinois University. His prior work experience includes two years as an associate attorney for the law firm of Wiedner & McAuliffe (Chicago, Illinois), eleven years as a research attorney and law clerk for the Appellate Court of Illinois, and several semesters as an adjunct instructor at Western Illinois University. He joined the political science faculty at STC in 2010. He is very interested in pedagogy and serves on the steering committee for STC's FOCUS Academy. In his spare time, he enjoys mountain biking, hiking, and rock climbing.



SCOTT L. NICOL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ART

Scott Nicol earned a Bachelor in Liberal Arts at Austin College in 1992, and a Master of Fine Arts in Drawing from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 1999. From 2000 through 2005, he taught courses on the creation of site-specific sculpture in the rainforest at the La Suerte Biological Field Station in Costa Rica and landscape drawing at the Ometepe Biological Field Station in Nicaragua. Since 2005, Scott has been a member of the visual arts faculty at South Texas College, where he teaches studio courses including Drawing and Painting.



MARY THANKAM WALKER ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SPEECH

Mary Thankam Walker earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at Lubbock Christian University. She earned her Master of Arts in Communication at Texas Tech. Currently Mary is attending North Central University studying in the doctorate program for general psychology. Prior to joining STC in 2005, she taught at both of her alma maters. Mary has also earned the Vera L. Simpson Award for dedication to research and has most recently been recognized by *Strathmore's Who's Who in Leadership and Achievement*.

★★★★ YEARS OF SERVICE ★★★★★

STC would not be the nationally recognized and award-winning institution it is without the dedication and commitment of its exceptional faculty members. The faculty members of STC truly care about the students and their success. Thus, we would like to recognize the following members for their loyalty and unwavering commitment to our college and our students.

20 YEARS OF SERVICE

Cesar Garcia Vocational Nursing Instructor
 Iris Jasso Administrative Office Careers Instructor

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

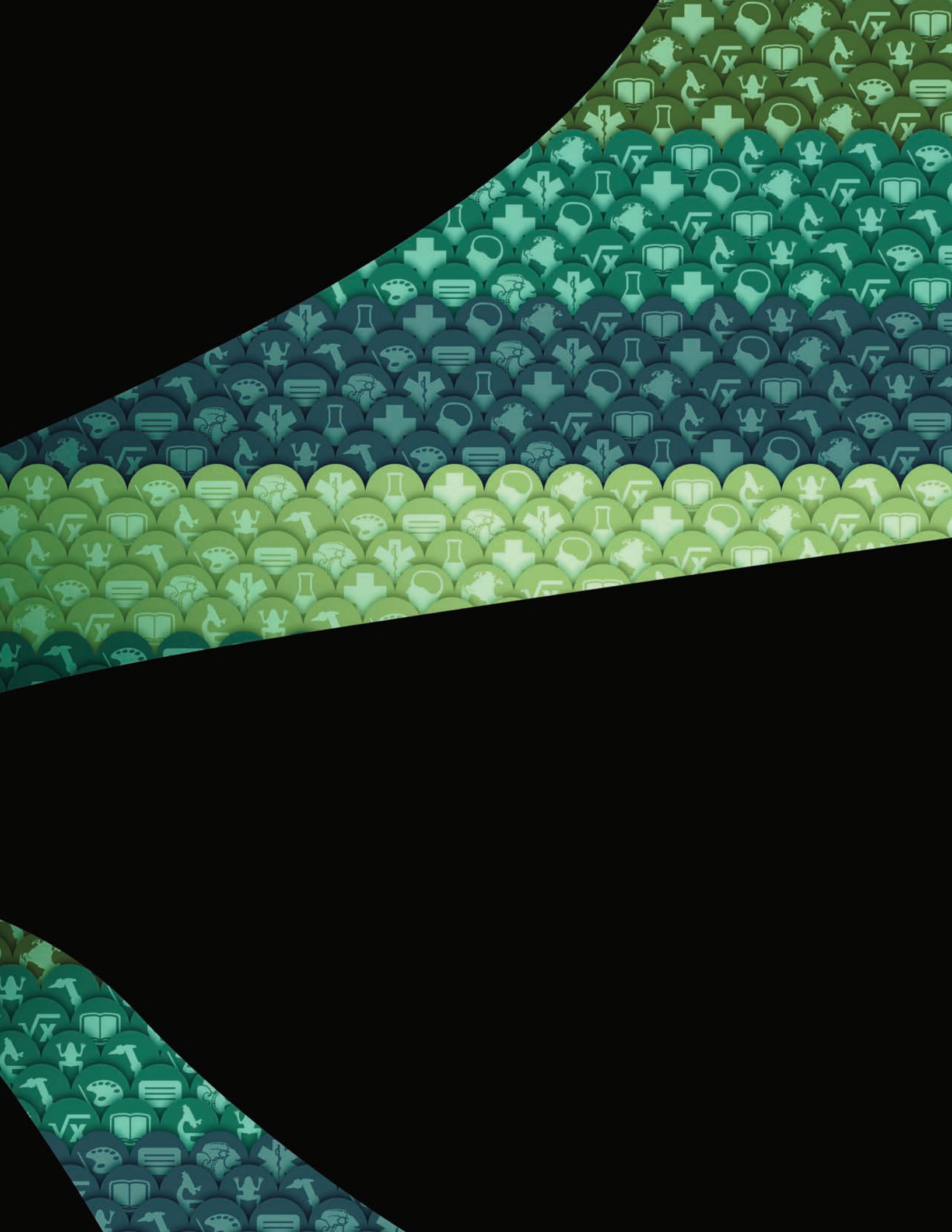
William Gordon Swanson Kinesiology Instructor
 Aparna Banerjee Ganguli Professor of Developmental Mathematics
 Dana Cantu English Instructor
 Jennifer B. Clark Associate Professor of Political Science
 Raul Galvan Biology Instructor
 Arlene Pierro Garcia Physical Therapist Assistant/Clinical Coordinator Instructor
 Jose Jesus Gonzalez Developmental English Instructor
 Jan Arne Nilsson Biology Instructor
 Laura Jean Nunn Speech Instructor
 Samuel Reza Associate Professor of Computer Science
 Van W. Wheat Biology Instructor

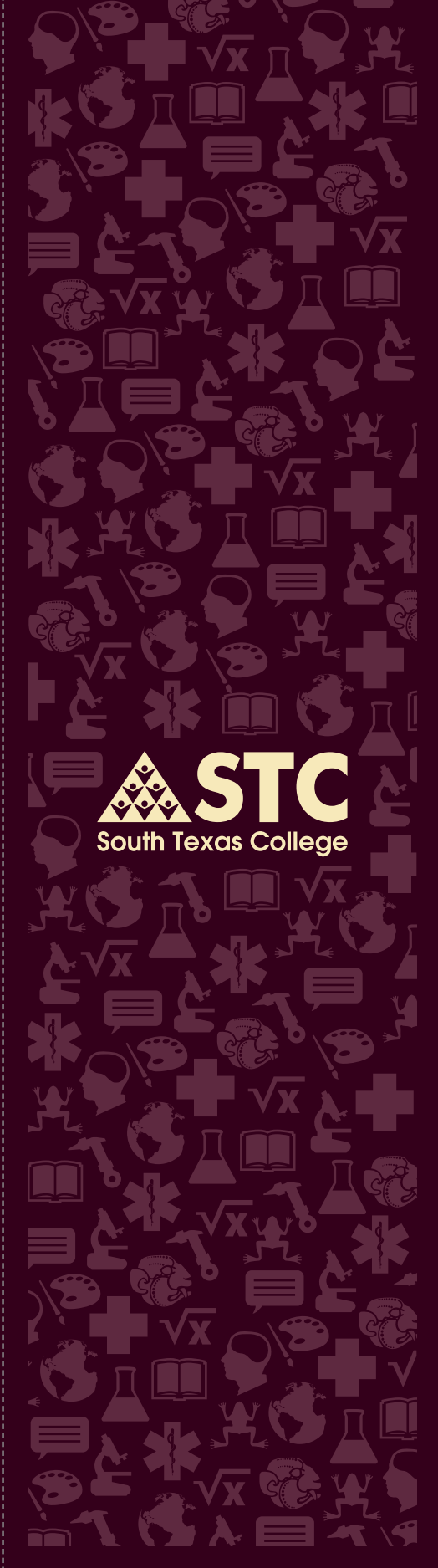
10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Hanan T. Amro Associate Professor of Mathematics
 Yinping Jiao Assistant Professor of Computer Science
 Marco Antonio Ruvalcaba Rodriguez Developmental Mathematics Instructor
 Jose A. Sanchez Associate Professor of Psychology
 David Lloyd Shepard Associate Professor of Psychology
 Kimberly Marie Snyder Business Administration Instructor
 Saiyid F. Wahid Physics Instructor
 Virginia Norquest Developmental English Instructor
 James P. Banford Associate Professor of Spanish
 Dominic Boyer Braune Associate Professor of Philosophy
 Rebecca De Los Santos Kinesiology Instructor
 Ruel Elizabeth Mixon Dietz Assistant Professor of Accounting
 Peter G. Doas Political Science Instructor
 Phyllis Leverich Evans Assistant Professor of Art
 Maria RM Garza Child Development Instructor
 Joseph D. Haske English Instructor
 Mario Jaime Morin Mathematics Instructor
 Tammi J. Naumann Developmental Reading Instructor
 Oscar A. Plaza Economics Instructor
 Aleli San Pedro Remigio Assistant Professor of Developmental Reading
 Judith Chavit Sevilla Dela Cruz Vocational Nursing Instructor
 Griselda Solis Business Administration Instructor
 Maria Teresa Tijerina Biology Instructor
 Omar Valdez Computer Aided Drafting & Design Instructor
 Richard Coronado English Instructor
 Laura Maria Gomez History Instructor
 Jose Rene Martinez Assistant Professor of English
 Lyda L. Neal Developmental Mathematics Instructor
 Xin Zuo Developmental English Instructor

FACULTY RETIREES

Rubina Azhar Child Development Instructor
 Robert Fowler Philosophy Instructor
 Carla Gridley English Instructor
 Anne Hernandez Business Administration Instructor
 William Macintosh Criminal Justice Instructor
 Gary McCorkle Economics Instructor
 Virginia Norquest Developmental English Instructor
 William Swanson Kinesiology Instructor





FACULTY SPOTLIGHT 2012-2013