

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE FACULTY SPOTLIGHT 2014-2015



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Each year new students embark on a journey as they enter the doors of South Texas College with the dream of bettering themselves for their families and their communities. Most of these students are first generation college students. For the students these dreams are precious hopes to be turned into realities. We at South Texas College recognize the precarious nature of these dreams and how they must be cultivated with the utmost care that they may come to fruition. At South Texas College, we continually strive to advance regional prosperity through the educational advancement of our students through the promotion of Community, Excellence, Integrity, Learning, Opportunity, and Student Success.

However, such student successes and achievements would not be possible without the unwavering and tireless support of our dedicated faculty members. As guardians of these dreams, South Texas College faculty instill in students the necessary confidence needed to achieve their goals, advocating for them and instilling in them the belief that they too can make a difference in the world. As champions of student success, faculty members cultivate the students' dreams and hopes for the future.

Thus, once more we invite you to join us as the Division of Academic Affairs proudly celebrates and recognizes the faculty of South Texas College for their commitment to the mission of the institution and for believing in not only the college's core values, but also in our students and their dreams for the future. Please join us in the celebration of Academic Excellence at South Texas College, as we launch our most recent publication to recognize some of the faculty through the 2014-2015 Faculty Spotlight.

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English faculty

DR. ERIC REITTINGER
President of Faculty Senate
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President of Council of Chairs
Assistant Dean, Divisions of Liberal Arts
and Social & Behavioral Sciences



ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE FACULTY

South Texas College has endeavored to advance regional prosperity through the educational advancement of its students. Nevertheless, transforming our students' hopes and dreams into realities would not be possible without a strong foundation - the South Texas College faculty, who embody the College's mission and values. Thus, South Texas College seeks faculty who champion the Institution's core values: excellence, student success, innovation, professionalism, collaboration, community, and integrity.

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

South Texas College faculty members exhibit the highest levels of professionalism, remain current and competent in their fields, and excel in a collaborative environment. Faculty members are familiar with diverse teaching methods and use these tools to encourage high levels of student engagement and student understanding.

A COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUCCESS

South Texas College faculty members are committed to student success. They guide, advise, motivate, and enhance student learning through passion for their discipline and demonstrate compassion and patience for their students. In addition, they are innovative in their teaching and seek all opportunities to identify strategies they can implement, which will motivate students to succeed.

A COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP AND COLLEGE SERVICE

South Texas College faculty members lead at local, regional, state, and national levels. Faculty leaders at South Texas College recommend and develop programs, trainings, and curricula that meet the ever changing needs of the community. They contribute to student success by participating in committees and serving as student club advisors, mentors to students, and as a vital resource for new faculty.

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

South Texas College faculty members are committed to life-long learning. They participate in professional development opportunities to improve their teaching, maintain currency with technological advances, and incorporate diverse teaching modalities into their courses.

A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CREATING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

South Texas College faculty members serve the community by participating in outreach initiatives, public speaking, dual enrollment, or community organizations. They interact with local businesses and schools to promote South Texas College's core values and strategic directions.

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE FACULTY - CHAMPIONS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Updated: August 18, 2015

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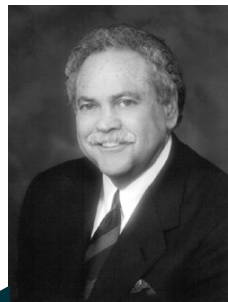


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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

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



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JENNIFER GUERRA
CULINARY ARTS



A Passion for Culinary Arts

As the lead Baking Instructor, Chef Jennifer Guerra began working at South Texas College in the spring of 2012. Since then she has been responsible for the graduation growth in the baking program from 1 graduate in the first year to 25 graduates for the 2014-2015 academic year. In order to promote and grow the program, Chef Jennifer and her colleagues host a Culinary Wars event which is a week of various culinary competitions including pastry, cake decorating, Iron Chef, Chopped, and Perfect Bite. By participating in Culinary Wars, students are able to showcase their talents and build up their confidence.

Moreover, Chef Jennifer's passion for culinary is evident in everything she completes. Her students see her passion and are more invested in their education as a result. Dedicated to improving the whole student experience, Chef Jennifer works to evolve her lectures each semester. Recently, she added an assignment called "Reflections" where she asks her students to reflect on their performance in the lab, analyzing their product results. If a product

does not turn out, then she will guide them to find out why they were not successful. The students find the reason and learn from their failed attempts. By reflecting on their mistakes, students have the opportunity to learn and grow. Additionally, Chef Jennifer has her students maintain blogs so they can share their experiences with other classmates. The students' willingness to put forth this level of effort testifies to the respect and appreciation they have for Chef Jennifer. By giving her all every day and loving her work, Chef Jennifer serves as an inspiration for her students.

Chef Jennifer is also dedicated to our community, as she offers free, monthly health cooking classes which are open to the public. With the ever-increasing obesity epidemic, Chef Jennifer strives to teach community members about healthy eating through quick cooking demonstrations. Through these classes, participants are able to see that healthy cooking can be fast, simple, and flavorful. Because of her service to the department, her students, and the community, Chef Jennifer is a very valuable asset.



**CHRISTOPHER
LEONARD**

ART

Community Curator and Creative Instructor

For Art Instructor Chris Leonard, giving students professional experience in the sometimes nebulous world of art and providing greater exposure and opportunities to build artistic proficiency is of the utmost importance. Chris provides these opportunities for his students through exhibits both on and off the college campus. For instance, Chris assists with the annual South Texas Ceramic Showdown at STC's Library Art Gallery each summer. This exhibit offers students the chance to collaborate and show artwork alongside peers from schools both in and outside of Texas. Additionally, Chris continues to select student and community work for display at a local, art-friendly restaurant, the Blue Onion.

In the same manner, Chris is a member of the Upper Valley Art League, and he serves as the advisor for the South Texas Clay Club. The Clay Club, under Chris' advisement, has participated in the McAllen Art Walk for the past several years with a showing at McAllen Stained Glass. At these events, students host throwing demonstrations and offer sparkling fine art selections from STC's kiln.

Furthermore, Chris leads by example and shows artwork in various venues locally, regionally, and nationally. While teaching at STC, his work has been included in a number of juried shows on a regional and national level. Thus, during the spring semester of 2015, The University of Dallas Regional Competition included his work Two Two-Sided Texas Tommies. This piece also received an Award of Merit from Juror Eva Kwong of Kent State University. Additionally, Chris has works on display at the Baltimore Clayworks in the exhibit Putting the Pieces Together, An Exhibition to Address what is Broken (curated by Sarah McCann). As an educator, Chris serves as a developer of talent, and as a result, each semester Chris provides opportunities indicating a wealth of examples of our students' abilities and talents. These opportunities also showcase and expose our college to the community. Chris furnishes students with professional experience, greater exposure, and development of artistic proficiency. He also provides the community an enhanced view of practicing and emerging artists, showcasing our community responsibility as a college.



**DR. REBECCA
MILLÁN**
ENGLISH



Modeling Excellence: A Passion for Learning and Teaching

Having been with the college for over thirteen years, Dr. Rebecca Millán's drive to innovate, learn, and contribute only becomes stronger with each passing year. Dr. Millán offers a profound and inspiring example of a professor who embodies the value of learning, and who integrates that learning into effective college service and classroom instruction that bridges the disciplinary divide.

During her time at STC, Dr. Millán has earned three new degrees: a master's degree in Sociology, a doctoral degree in educational leadership, and most recently, an associate's degree in graphic arts. These degrees demonstrate her personal commitment to the belief that education is innately valuable and ongoing—a belief that is central to the mission of the entire field of higher education. She does not merely promote learning as a classroom instructor; she lives it as a person. Dr. Millán understands that learning does not exist best in isolation, but rather only thrives fully when its place in the vast web of interconnected fields of study is understood.

This same focus on the larger picture is manifest in her college

service. Hence, Dr. Millán is one of the founders of Sigma Kappa Delta, the English Honors Society. She chaired the English Retention and Advising Committee for many years and has been extensively involved in the ongoing process of advising English majors. Moreover, she was instrumental not only in designing and teaching the new online competency-based English courses for BAT majors, but in developing the standards by which all future classes of this type will be taught.

Dr. Millán models this belief in learning and passion for education as a whole in her classroom, creating an environment in which students are exposed to the profound, but often ignored, connections between disciplines. Dr. Millán's broad base of learning allows her to show students that the learning one experiences in any class is of value in every class. She can connect artistic creation to art history to sociology to writing, and then tie all of it into the curriculum requirements of South Texas College. She helps the college graduate not merely students, but deep thinkers and lifelong learners.



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MERRIE VAN LOY

DEVELOPMENTAL
MATHEMATICS

A Devoted Advocate

As a dedicated faculty member, Developmental Mathematics Instructor Merrie Van Loy began working for the college in 1995 and has since taught College Algebra, Introduction to Computer Science, and all levels of Developmental Mathematics. During her tenure at STC, she has been a very active member of the Faculty Senate and the South Texas Faculty Association.

As an educator, Merrie was a devoted advocate for her students, realizing that many of them need more personalized help and instruction. Thus, Merrie spent countless hours in the CLE, tutoring math. She offered personal tutoring and assistance for dozens of her students, knowing that sometimes a special need or personal problem could prevent them from being successful in class.

Retiring at the end of the 2014/2015 academic year, Merrie has had a positive and profound impact on the school, as she co-

authored a computer science grant that was worth nearly a million dollars to the college. Additionally, she created the current final exam schedule, providing a simplified, organized timeline for exams. In the same manner, Merrie has worked tirelessly with the Faculty Senate, including ten years during which she helped create, maintain, and present the annual faculty salary chart. Merrie served as an officer of the South Texas Faculty Association for years and continued to remain active even after retiring as an officer.

As she moves into retirement, Merrie continues to be active in her community, as she provides forwarding address labels for Winter Texas whose mail must be sent back north each year. She also currently serves as the "Calendar Chairperson," responsible for creating, scheduling, and maintaining all recreational activities in her retirement park. Merrie will be greatly missed at South Texas College.

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.



CRYSTAL BIRD RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY

Teaching with Enthusiasm

As Chair of the Radiologic Technology Program, Crystal Bird received her BS in Radiologic Science from Midwestern State University and her MA in Educational Leadership from Trident University. She is also a licensed technologist in both radiology and mammography. Crystal joined South Texas College in 2001, and her experience includes teaching all courses in the radiologic discipline and includes the development of the first Mammography Certification Program in the Rio Grande Valley. Currently, she is expanding the Radiologic Technology Program to include certification in CT, MRI, and Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

In the classroom, Crystal has a unique way of engaging the students' attention in every lecture by transmitting energy and enthusiasm to them. Her energetic teaching style and love for the material is contagious, and students quickly become engaged in the subject matter themselves. Crystal serves as a facilitator in the classroom, believing that students learn better by doing than watching. In one instance, Crystal has her students complete a National Radiologic Technology Week (NRTW) Project in her Radiographic Imaging Equipment course. In celebration of NRTW and their profession, Crystal has students work in groups to prepare display boards which showcase their knowledge of radiology. The students then present their research and boards to the NAH community in a public forum. From these projects, Crystal hopes that her students take with them a sense of pride in themselves for all of the hard work and dedication it takes to pursue their dreams. She also hopes that they realize the significance of their efforts in improving the quality of life for themselves, their families, and the members of our community.



LYUDMYLA DICKINSON ECONOMICS

Using Art and Design to Teach Economics

Originally from the Ukraine, Lyudmyla Dickinson has experienced the results of a variety of economic policies in a way that many students in the United States have not. Having personally experienced communism, inflation, deficit, stagflation, unemployment, and many other economic conditions, Lyudmyla is able to bring these experiences to her students and make the economic theories come alive as a result.

With a master's in Economics from Chernivtsi State University and a diploma in Multimedia Design from the New Image College of Design and Technology Inc., business and art have always been part of Lyudmyla's life. Thus, she uses art and design in order to engage her students and help them gain a better understanding of economics. For instance, one assignment features the negative effects of credit cards. For this assignment, Lyudmyla has her students create a flyer on the negative effects of credit cards, and then they must share the information with their peers outside the class. This activity motivates students and helps them demonstrate a deeper understanding of the economic concepts and consequences as well as the responsibility of using credit cards. Most recently, Lyudmyla had her students design a brochure titled "How to Become an Entrepreneur." Lyudmyla believes that "when an instructor is truly passionate about teaching, students can sense the enthusiasm, forward-thinking and positive energy that a teacher brings." Additionally, she feels that "work with passion can, and does change lives," and she always tries to model this behavior with her students that they too may become successful.



DAVID FREEMAN VISUAL ARTS

Art: A Tool for Social Awareness

Demonstrating to his students that art can be used as an instrument for social awareness, David Freeman creates hands-on learning experiences that allow students to utilize visual images to impact community awareness. As part of his public art billboards assignment, students create billboard displays with socially conscious themes that combine fine art, graphic design, and photographic images. David has forged partnerships with local billboard owners to showcase student work. They have created displays on such topics as public health (smoking, drunk driving, obesity), education (student retention and success), and controlling the pet population. Students gain valuable design skills while also performing a service to the community. The billboard assignment is a great way for students to experience a creative involvement while fabricating skills that will help them succeed in life.

The assignment also allows participants to develop their math skills - particularly in the area of fractions and teaches the principles and elements of design. The assignment teaches how the photographic arts can empower students, promoting the arts and building their careers. This assignment readily ties into other disciplines such as Philosophy, History, and Ethics and advances the institution's goals as it positively engages the students and enriches our community.



MIGUEL GARCIA BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Mixing it Up and Making It Fun!

Associate Professor Miguel Garcia has been with South Texas College's Business Administration Department for over 18 years. Prior to coming to STC, Miguel worked as a Certified Public Accountant, and he continues to serve clients in the McAllen area.

In order to deliver effective instruction and have students take their learning seriously, Miguel has customized his teaching techniques. While he wants his students to be diligent and take their studies seriously, he also wants them to have fun at the same time. Thus, he teaches by "making it fun," rather than stressing that it is accounting or another business course. For instance, Miguel often starts his lectures with an engaging two-minute activity where the students must read and comment on an article, video, or another work related to the lecture's theme.

In order to engage his students and make the lessons fun, Miguel integrates theory and accounting practice. Hence, he often has contests where he gives out prizes or bonus points on the next exam. Miguel also brings his CPA experiences to the classroom by sharing real-life accounting situations and applications. Miguel observes how strongly students engage with the material when they have the opportunity to learn about how it applies in real-life situations. Similarly, Miguel feels that student motivation is crucial for student learning. Hence, he takes the time to learn every student's name and shows he cares about them by soliciting their feedback through surveys and polls. Then he finds ways to inspire them on their paths.



NICHOLAS GUTIERREZ COMPUTER SCIENCE

Employing Robotics to Teach Programming

Nicolas H. Gutierrez recognizes that programming is a challenging subject for the majority of the students to learn, and at some point, the students must be reminded that programming can also be fun and deeply rewarding. Thus, Nicolas strives to consistently challenge and engage students through the use of robotics. In his second C++ course, Nicolas introduces his students to robotics and teaches them to program the robots.

However, programming the robots to move is not enough. By presenting their students with a goal and some competition, the students worked harder to achieve a goal. The goal is to program the robot to perform better than the other students' robot in a series of challenges. Thus, Nicolas asks students to complete three challenges including a maze, race, and sumo. In the maze, students are to program the robot so it can travel through an unknown maze in the shortest amount of time. In the second challenge of a race, students start on one side of the room and must reach the other side the quickest, avoiding any obstacles in the path. For the final Sumo challenge, two robots begin in the center of a circle with the goal of pushing the other robot out of the circle. The two robots are programmed with a strategy to win, so coming up with a creative counter strategy is also a challenge. Through the competition, students are able to see a positive, realistic application for the information they are learning.



RICARDO OLIVARES HUMAN RESOURCES

Performance Management

Ricardo Olivares joined STC in the Partnership/Continuing Education area in January 2006. In 2007, he transferred to the Institute for Advanced Manufacturing, and, in fall 2013, he joined the Human Resource Department. Additionally, Ricardo is an US Army Veteran retiring with the rank of First Sergeant. Ricardo's teaching philosophy is to maintain a positive attitude with all his students and to show his students that he is there for the sole purpose of their success. He believes the greatest strength that an instructor has is "performance management." Like a business environment, an instructor, like any good leader, must know his students. Ricardo knows that each student is different and learns in different ways. As a result, he gets to know his students through classroom interaction. Most importantly, Ricardo understands that the instructor must be caring and responsible, as there is a direct correlation between student aptitude and instructor attitude. In summation, he feels that "if the instructor is engaged with their students, learning becomes easy and fun."

Application is also part of Ricardo's teaching strategy. For instance, in his HR Training and Development class, students are required to design human resource training processes, engaging in a semester long project that requires multiple modules to the end product. The students must provide a training plan, execution of the training, activities, PowerPoints, quizzes, and exams, as if the student were an HR professional working in the training department. Through these philosophies and assignments, Ricardo provides his students with practical experience and the confidence they need to execute such processes.



DR. EDWIN JERRY S. TAMAYO BIOLOGY

Enhancing Student Learning of Anatomical Structures Using Digital Photography

Dr. Edwin Tamayo has been a member of STC's Biology Department since May 2006. Prior to coming to the U.S. in 2005, he taught Human Anatomy and Physiology, basic and advanced courses in Genetics, Biochemistry, and graduate research for 18 years in the Philippines. His years of teaching reflect his dedication to shaping the minds and the future of the youth. Furthermore, Dr. Tamayo studied and published the genetic, diet, and lifestyle factors of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and diabetes, and he has certifications in Food, Health and Nutrition, and a leadership certification in Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP).

In the classroom, Dr. Tamayo recognizes that students studying Human Anatomy and Physiology often find it overwhelming to identify and memorize an enormous amount of anatomical structures and their details within the limited number of laboratory sessions for each laboratory exercise. Since digital and computer technology has become readily available for student use, Dr. Tamayo has integrated digital photography to enhance learning of anatomical structures. Thus, he has students work in groups to take pictures of actual laboratory models of gross anatomical structures and microscope slides of specimens for microscopic anatomical structures using their own digital devices. Afterwards, the students evaluate and label their pictures by comparing them with the figures in their laboratory manual. The completed labelled pictures serve as review materials for students in preparation for their laboratory practicals and quizzes. They will then be compiled as the students' laboratory portfolio to be turned-in for a grade by the end of the semester. Dr. Tamayo's students have shown significant improvements in successful completion rates since he implemented this technique.



DIANE TETER BIOLOGY

Contextualizing Biology through Hands-On Projects

Many students find biology to be one of the more challenging courses within the core curriculum, yet a holistic approach that makes the content relevant to students' lives can improve their success. Associate Professor Diane Teter understands that by creating a tangible connection between students' day-to-day lives and the complex subject matter of biology, she can most effectively ensure student learning. In order to ignite interest in biology, Diane has designed a multi-faceted semester project in which students create a written report on their choice of the following topics: nutrition (diet and exercise), gardening, aquariums, terrariums, or a topic of their choosing with instructor approval. Students must then write a 4-5 page report, incorporating tables, graphs, and journals in an academic writing format. All of the projects must include data collection, analysis, and application which satisfy the higher-level core objectives of critical thinking, empirical/quantitative skills in addition to teamwork and communication utilized in discussion forums.

The final semester project demonstrates the biology concept of the scientific method, which contains the steps of observation, hypothesis, experiment, use of data and/or observations, and conclusion; all of which can lead to a theory. Thus, not only do the students learn, but also the core objectives are fulfilled, and biology becomes personal and relevant in the students' everyday lives.



WAYNE WILLIAMS HEALTH CARE STUDENT SUCCESS

Preparing Students for the Demands of Healthcare Programs and Professions

Wayne Williams, a Vancouverite, has lived in McAllen since 1993 with his wife, Chelan, also a South Texas College healthcare educator. He has been a counselor, instructor, and program chair at South Texas College for over eighteen years and is passionate about student success and preparing today's students for demanding healthcare programs. Thus, he has helped develop the College Success for Healthcare course (CSFH) that provides timely, specific, accurate, didactic, and experiential curriculum to self-declared healthcare students.

Since inception in the spring 2009 semester from just a single class with 12 students to the current 55 sections annually, over 5,000 five thousand students have taken the course College Success for Healthcare. In this course, College Success Instructor Wayne Williams and his colleagues introduce potential healthcare students to all eleven healthcare professions at STC. While they may already have a particular direction in mind, this presentation provides them with a stronger understanding and foundation for making decisions about educational choices, and many often discover new and more appropriate professions. These presentations are coordinated with program chairs and instructors in the eleven programs and afterward include students who are already in the NAH program. This program provides students with a particular reality to the time commitment and rigorous expectations of healthcare education and the profession. The affective domain and corrective development in the students' minds strengthens them as they prepare six-nine-twelve months before entering a healthcare program at STC.



DR. MENG-HUNG WU COMPUTER AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Challenging Programming Students through Mobile Application Design

In the classroom, Dr. Meng-Hung Wu strives to inspire, guide, and challenge his students while maximizing their critical thinking skills. In his Special Topics course, he focuses on the popular task of iOS (iPhone, iPad, etc.) programming. Dr. Wu teaches students that in order to write a great application (app) that has the potential to generate revenue, one must start with a good idea. Dr. Wu helps spark students' initial ideas for their iOS development project by introducing popular apps in the market.

No matter what type of app is created, there are a few fundamental design patterns and techniques that Dr. Wu presents to the students before they may begin to write the code. This guidance is instrumental in order for students to create successful apps.

In addition to inspiring and engaging students by having them select a project topic that matches their interests, Dr. Wu also challenges the students to think critically. Apple supports iOS development using various programming languages and platforms, so the students are challenged to use the programming skills acquired from previous courses they have taken.

In order to continue to provide excellence in his teaching, Dr. Wu keeps up with the most current technology in the computer programming field. Recently, he attended the 2014 Game Developers Conference, which is the world's largest, and longest-running professionals-only game developer event. Through his continuing professional development and innovative approach to teaching, Dr. Wu offers students the opportunity to take engaging classes that not only interest them, but also benefit them professionally.

VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAM SKILLS TEAM



Creating Consistency in Instruction of Nursing Skills

As the Vocational Nursing Program Skills Team, Zelda Colegado, Delphia May, and Rebecca Miller have worked together to develop a comprehensive method of didactic and lab instruction utilizing the theory and skills they have gained during their education as MSN nurse educators as well as their many years of nursing practice. They have developed a uniform approach to instruction that ensures that students at all campuses receive the same information in didactics and are uniformly taught nursing skills.

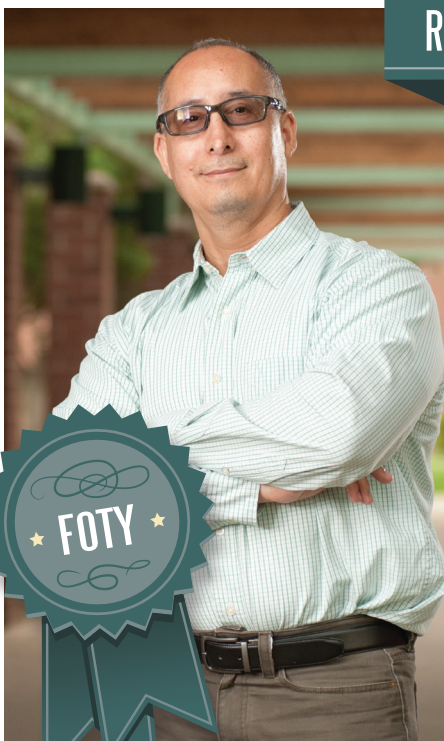


ROBERT SEAN KENNEDY HISTORY

eFaculty of the Year

Robert Sean Kennedy has served as a faculty member in the History Department since fall 2007. During the last five years, Sean has demonstrated his passion for teaching online through a true commitment to innovation and excellence that drives online learning. He has implemented various techniques that allow for greater student engagement. One of these techniques allows him to flip his class by creating and posting video lectures online. By offering the video lectures online, Sean is able to reserve class time for working on the essay questions associated with the lectures, both in groups and individually. In class, students break into groups utilizing the white boards responding to components of the lecture essays. This approach allows Sean to see who is prepared and who is not --well before any type of exam. Furthermore, students who are prepared have the opportunity to help those that are not as prepared during class, which greatly reinforces those students' understanding of the subject matter. Since class time is quite active, students are able to retain and internalize the subject matter more by employing episodic memory. As a result, most students are prepared and successful. Sean explains, "It is heartwarming to witness thirty plus students arrive for the exam and leave the exam endowed with confidence."

Additionally, in his online course, Sean makes himself available to the students by hosting google hangout sessions twice a week. He typically offers these sessions in the late evening in order to accommodate students' outside work and family obligations. During these sessions Sean fields questions concerning content and course expectations that students may be more successful in the course. Sean takes great care in the design of his course, working closely with the Distance Education staff, to ensure that his courses offer the best learning experience for his students.



RENE ZUNIGA EDUCATION

Faculty of the Year

Rene Zuniga is currently the Chair of the College Success and Education Departments at South Texas College. His profound passion for service has led him to be involved with multiple committees and participate in numerous student activities. Since joining STC, he has served on the Curriculum Committee, President's Faculty Advisory Committee, and Faculty Senate, to name a few. Rene has also represented the Office of Professional and Organizational Development by facilitating the Teaching and Learning Academy and co-facilitating the FOCUS Academy. He often presents on classroom management techniques for faculty in multiple departments and divisions.

In the classroom, Rene utilizes an innovative style of teaching which allows him to incorporate mobile technologies in order to engage his students in multisensory, multidimensional, and multi-interactive learning experiences. He strongly believes technology can bring together the subject matter, the learner, and the instructor in a way that improves the teaching and educational experience. Rene feels that students learn more effectively through continued interactions with each other, which is why he prefers to commit much of his classroom time to cooperative learning activities. In addition to being an outstanding, effective faculty member in the classroom, Rene demonstrates great integrity, empathy, and a strong work ethic. He provides strong leadership for the students by modeling participation in community service projects, such as the school supply drive, walk-a-thons, Valley Aids Council, and many more. Rene serves as an inspiration to the students, faculty, and staff who work with him.

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.



ROBIN BELL ENGLISH

As a NISOD Excellence Award recipient, Robin Bell has an unwavering commitment to student excellence and faculty innovation. At the heart of her success is her belief that no course design—indeed, no lesson—is a finished product, and no level of student achievement is “enough.” For Robin, this manifests itself in an ongoing assessment, evaluation, and reinvention of every class activity which is measured against individual and collegiate standards, and the current best practices in recent academic research. The result is a set of assignments that fascinate and engage the students. Robin then leverages this engagement into student ownership of their work that leads to deep and thoughtful analysis. English Department Chair, Stephen Morrison states, “While working with Ms. Bell is an honor, it is also a pleasure, as her passion for her subject, and her ongoing eagerness to engage with current scholarship continues to inspire my own ongoing reinvention of instruction.”



DR. ROSALINDA CANTU SPEECH

As the founding Chair of the Communication Arts Department, Dr. Rosalinda Cantu has overseen the Communications Studies, Advertising/Public Relations and Drama programs since May 2009. While she no longer chairs the Drama Department, under her leadership the number of drama majors grew from 0 to 98 and communication majors increased from 5 to 200. Dr. Cantu also started an annual Communication Arts Festival. Notable community leaders are invited to speak about their own lives in regards to education, leadership, and success in order to motivate students to graduate and become successful. Students have an opportunity to participate in a Speech Competition where they showcase their public speaking skills and compete for scholarship money. As an inspiring leader, Dr. Cantu hopes that her students will “gain knowledge and skills to enhance their relationships in the workplace, in their personal lives, and as members of their own communities.”



DANIEL CATHER MUSIC

Daniel Cather joined the South Texas College Music faculty in 2008. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Eastern Illinois University, where he studied piano and composition. As a student, Daniel graduated with departmental and university honors and a 4.0 GPA. During his tenure at STC, Daniel started the first Electronic Music classes south of San Antonio and launched the STC Jazz Ensemble. He teaches Music Theory, Class Piano, Applied Piano, Composition, and Sight Singing & Ear Training courses and serves as accompanist for the STC Choir. Daniel is also a well-known face in the community due to his work as a performer, musical director, worship leader, and UIL adjudicator. He finds immense satisfaction in shaping students into professional musicians and loves to see the joy it brings as they attain their educational goals. He hopes they leave STC “sharing their passion for music and learning with others.”



DARCI ANDRÉ CATHER ENGLISH

Darci André Cather firmly believes that all students can achieve great success. In particular, she understands that when students are in an environment that stimulates interest, offers guidance and support, and affords them ownership of their education, their future opens with possibility. This philosophy guides her teaching, and indeed the entirety of her professional activities. In the classroom, this belief manifests first in her use of student-centered pedagogy that, while still respecting the content that can be offered in short lectures, creates an active learning environment through an emphasis on discussion, small group work, hands-on activities, and individual conferencing with students. The result is a multi-tiered instructional environment in which students have frequent and varied interactions with the material, and with their classmates and instructor. Students ultimately are given both the tools and the responsibility for their own success.



PAUL GAYTAN PARALEGAL

As the program chair of the Paralegal program, Paul Gaytan has worked diligently to strengthen his program. Thus, he has implemented a focus on not only teaching Texas law, but also on teaching students how to prepare pleadings, written discovery, and motions in many areas of the law. Having practiced law for 16 years himself, Paul understands that students need to learn practical skills to assist attorneys in real-world practice. Additionally, Paul works unceasingly to provide the students with practical skills while also helping the community. Thus, he has organized many free legal clinics for the community. Under his leadership, his department, in conjunction with the Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, has offered many free clinics on wills and power of attorney, providing thousands of dollars in free legal services to the poor and underserved in our community. His dedication to faculty, students, and the community is truly second to none.



RUBEN LEMUS, JR. CULINARY ARTS

A dedicated advocate for students and faculty, Chef Ruben Lemus, Jr. is committed to his program as the chairperson for the Culinary Arts Department. Enrollment has been very successful due to his dedication and commitment to the program. Under his leadership and with the unwavering support of Chef Jennifer Guerra, the baking program has grown from having 1 graduate to having 25 graduates with their Commercial Baking Certificate. Always helpful and ready to help his students succeed, Chef Ruben hopes his students "will never be done learning." He believes if students just have passion, they can always learn more.



RICHARD LUBBEN ART

As a devoted faculty member, Richard Lubben is a gifted artist with clear insight into academic logistics. His most recent accomplishment was being a recipient of a Fulbright scholarship, which took him to Canada to develop a nation-wide communication system to promote and create a bilingual degree option. Richard's research project, titled "Online Global Learning Community Project: A Dialogue about Art, Human Rights and Social Justice," focused on developing online learning communities to introduce higher education students to a multicultural discussion from a global perspective. Having served as program chair for many years, he remains one of the division's most devoted and well-respected advisors.



CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL POLITICAL SCIENCE

As an Assistant Professor of Political Science, Christopher Marshall is deeply committed to student engagement and student success. Thus, he has been a leader in the adoption of active learning strategies. He has also taken a primary role in helping other faculty to move towards a “flipped” classroom through his role as a faculty trainer in the college’s FOCUS Academy. Prior to joining STC, Christopher worked as an associate attorney for the law firm of Wiedner & McAuliffe (Chicago, Illinois) for two years, as a research attorney and law clerk for the Appellate Court of Illinois for eleven years, and as an adjunct instructor at Western Illinois University for several semesters.



TERRENCE MILLER COLLEGE SUCCESS AND EDUCATION

As a tenacious, vibrant, and enthusiastic professor, Terrence “Terry” Miller is always very prompt to volunteer for any initiatives that promote the prosperity of the College Success and Education Departments. Thus, he has presented on college success teaching strategies at the College Academic Support Programs (CASP). Additionally, he continues to conduct professional development on several topics related to college success, as he has trained faculty at the Early College High School programs for McAllen ISD, PSJA ISD, South Texas ISD, and Progreso ISD. Moreover, Terry serves on the LASS Division Curriculum Committee, the College-Wide Curriculum Committee, and the College-Wide Academic Classification Committee. Continually praised for his hard work ethic, he is always willing to help other instructors with degree plans, curriculum, and the college success scholarship. Terry describes his time at STC as “a significant highlight in a lengthy academic career spanning nearly 50 years.”



DR. ERIC REITTINGER PSYCHOLOGY

Dr. Eric Reitinger obtained his Ph.D. in Child Development from the University of Minnesota in 1995. After teaching at the University of Toledo and Texas A&M University – Kingsville, he arrived at South Texas College in 2004. He served as Chair of the Criminal Justice and Social Sciences Department from 2007 – 2010 and is currently serving as the inaugural chair of the Psychology Department, which separated from the Criminal Justice and Social Sciences Department in the spring of 2014. Dr. Reitinger has been active in Faculty Senate and has just completed a two-year term as president of the faculty senate. He will continue to serve for two more years on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee as Past President. In his free time, Dr. Reitinger enjoys golf and reading non-fiction books on the Civil War and World War II. He is fascinated with the bravery and heroic efforts of normal people under very abnormal circumstances.



ALEXANDRO SARABIA PSYCHOLOGY

As a former STC student, Psychology Instructor Alexandro Sarabia exemplifies student success. Alex is dedicated to his students and the community. Hence, he serves as co-advisor to the Starr County Psychology Club. The Starr County Psychology Club is one of the largest and most active student organizations on any campus. Thus, they host the Starr County Got Talent show, Role Models Conference, and Mental Health Awareness Conference every semester. Additionally, Alex also contributes to the community by making many presentations and workshops, on topics such as time management, stress management, and test anxiety. Alex has presented over 100 such workshops to special groups of students, including the CLE tutors at the Starr County and Mid-Valley campuses, EMT students, nursing students, and high school dual enrollment students. Alex’s service to the college is truly exemplary.



DR. AARON WILSON

PHILOSOPHY

In just a little over a year at South Texas College, Dr. Aaron Wilson has already proven to be a very valuable asset to the Philosophy Department. In addition to teaching four different courses, Dr. Wilson co-designed a History and Philosophy learning community for one of the Dual Enrollment Academies which he team-taught in spring 2015. He also finished and successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on the philosophy of C. S. Peirce, under the direction of one of the top (and most demanding) Peirce scholars in the world (Dr. Susan Haack, of the University of Miami). Although NISOD awards are typically given to more seasoned, veteran teachers, Dr. Wilson has already fairly well-established himself as a very promising member of our community.

DR. RUFINO GARCIA, JR.

COLLEGE SUCCESS AND EDUCATION

With his exceptional experience as a military officer, school administrator, and instructor, Dr. Rufino Garcia, Jr. has proven to be an invaluable asset to the College Success and Education Departments. Dr. Garcia served 21 years in the United States Army and retired as an Army officer. During this time, he lived throughout the world, including two years in San Juan, Puerto Rico, ten years in Erlangen and Nuremberg, Germany, four years in Madrid, Spain, and one year in Camp Carroll, Korea. He served in many key leadership positions and even taught as Assistant Professor at the United States Military Academy, N.Y. (West Point). Now Dr. Garcia shares these experiences in order to inspire his students to succeed in college and achieve their life goals. Dr. Garcia is wholly committed to helping students “stay motivated and succeed in their professional and educational endeavors.”

DR. KEVIN PEEK

ECONOMICS

Having joined the Business Administration Department full-time in the fall of 2012, Dr. Kevin Peek has been actively involved in developing engaging approaches to his instruction in Economics. He has also demonstrated a desire to serve South Texas College through various endeavors. Thus, he most recently hosted the 2nd Annual Bi-National Innovations Conference where he was also an active team member. He has also founded the department's first business journal, titled The Journal of Accounting, Economics, & Business Administration, which was first released in May 2015. Dr. Peek actively seeks ways to improve not only his instruction, but also the quality of the engagement and structure of the department. As a result, he is an excellent example of a NISOD Excellence award recipient.

ACADEMIC CLASSIFICATION

CLASS OF 2014-2015 ★★★★★



DR. HANAN AMRO PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

Prior to joining STC in 2003, Dr. Hanan Amro worked at Laredo community College for six years. She obtained a bachelor's in Mathematics from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania in 1990 and a master's degree in Mathematics from Kansas State University in 1992. Additionally, she earned her doctorate in Education Leadership in May 2014 from Texas A & M – Kingsville with a dissertation of The Effects of Motivation, Technology, and Satisfaction on Student Achievement in Face-To-Face and Online Classes in College Algebra at a College in South Texas. For Dr. Amro, teaching is a joy and an art that she treasures. She strongly believes that implementing different learning styles will enhance learning for both online and traditional students. Dr. Amro's mission is to create an academic environment with an ambitious set of goals, one of which is to support the economic growth of the community.



DR. LIANA ANDREASEN PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

Dr. Liana Andreassen is originally from Romania. She received her MA at Salisbury University and her PhD at Binghamton University. She has published over 25 short stories in journals such as *Fiction International*, *Lumina*, *Calliope*, *The Raven Chronicles*, *The Horror Zine*, *The Willow Review*, *Mobius*, *a Journal of Social Change*, *Scintilla*, *Weave Magazine*, and others. She has also published academic essays and reviews in *Alecarr*, *Texas Review*, *Rampike*, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, *Romanian Journal of Artistic Creativity*, *Southwestern American Literature*, and *The CEA Critic*. She has received two Pushcart nominations (for fiction and for translation work).



DARCI ANDRÉ CATHER ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

Darci André Cather grew up in a small, agrarian town in Illinois. Like many of our students, she began her college education at a community college where she fell in love with the community college and everything it represents: commitment to student success, community outreach, and the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students. After graduating with her associate's, she attended the University of Illinois and later the University of Montana, obtaining a bachelor's and master's in English. She is thankful to have had so many talented and inspiring professors in her life and hopes to inspire her students in the same way. Darci hopes her students are "better people upon leaving STC, having learned the value of education and the joy that comes from learning." Furthermore, she hopes that her students recognize the importance of giving back to the community that together we may make the world a better place.



VERONICA E. DOMINGUEZ ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS

Veronica E. Dominguez was hired as Mathematics Instructor for the Mid-Valley Campus beginning fall 2006. She has served the college as a member of the South Texas College Child Development Center hiring committee, Co-Chair of the Mathematics Textbook Committee, Faculty Senate member, and as a member of STC's Focus II Academy. She has also participated in numerous grants the Mathematics Department has been awarded. Furthermore, Veronica was received the Distinguished Teaching and Learning Award in 2012. Veronica believes that all students can be successful in the study of mathematics when given the opportunity to make connections between concepts and learn from one another in a cooperative learning environment.



DR. BRETT MILLÁN PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

Joining STC in 2000, Dr. Brett Millán brought his passion for literature and experience in business writing to the English Department. However, his yearning to learn new concepts did not stop. Brett earned a master's in Interdisciplinary Studies – Anthropology and then a Doctorate in Educational Leadership all the while serving as Assistant Chair. In 2008, Brett became the Interim Director/Interim Associate Dean where he coordinated the transition to Blackboard Learn and established STC's Virtual Campus. His love of teaching and learning brought him back to the traditional classroom full-time both as a faculty member and as a student. Brett teaches a variety of courses in English, Anthropology, and Humanities. In addition, he has served on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Learning Technologies Advisory Committee and now on their Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee. He believes that learning is a lifelong pursuit, and his goal is that his students learn to love the pursuit of knowledge.



TERRENCE MILLER

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF COLLEGE SUCCESS

Having been with the college for over 16 years, Terry Miller initially served as an adjunct instructor teaching geography to Education majors who would transfer to UTPA upon receiving their Associate of Arts Teaching degree. He joined the Education Department full-time in 2003 and later transferred to the College Success Department when it was created in 2005. At that time he served as Lead Instructor for the first year and as Assistant Chair of the College Success program until 2012. His work has appeared in the International Journal of Transformative Emotional Intelligence, and he received the 2011 Personal Excellence Award presented at the Emotional Intelligence Training and Research Institute annual conference.



DR. CHRISTOPHER A. P. NELSON

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Christopher A. P. Nelson joined South Texas College as a Philosophy Instructor in 2004, after receiving his PhD in Philosophy from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. He has taught all of the Philosophy courses offered at STC, as well as the Introduction to Humanities, and the upper division "ethics" courses in both the Medical & Health Services Management and Organizational Leadership Bachelor Degree Programs. He currently serves as Chair of the Department of History and Philosophy (2006-2009, 2012-present), and Assistant Dean of Humanities (2014-present) -- overseeing Program Development and Student Success Initiatives in American Sign Language, Developmental English, Developmental Reading, English, History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Mexican-American Studies, Philosophy, and Spanish. He has also served as President of South Texas College's Council of Chairs (2014-2015), and Chair of South Texas College's Curriculum and Program Review Committee (2012-2014).



JOHN STEVEN RICE

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

John Steven Rice has taught at South Texas College as a full-time instructor since 2005. He began his teaching experience at STC as an adjunct in 1996. He holds master's degrees in Latin American Studies and in History. His research interests include the influence of Liberation Theology on Protestant churches in Revolutionary Nicaragua and more recently the attempt to create a National Catholic Church in Mexico in 1872. At South Texas College, he uses technology in the classroom to help students analyze how Hollywood films influence political and social thinking.



CYNTHIA G. SANCHEZ

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

As a Certified Public Accountant with experience in various accounting fields and management areas, Cynthia G. Sanchez joined STC's Business Administration Department in 2007. In the classroom, Cynthia focuses on continuous improvement in student engagement. She strongly believes that "students will learn and retain concepts if they are fully engaged." Thus, her goal is to engage her students. Additionally, Cynthia co-founded the Kappa Beta Delta Honor Society in 2009. Furthermore, she has served on various committees and teams, including Chair of DTLA, Grade Appeals Committee, Entrepreneurship Summit Planning, Marketing Advisory Committee, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, Teaching Circle Academy, and BA Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Program team. Not only is Cynthia dedicated to her work at the college, but she also strives to serve the community as well, participating in Boy Scouts of America, St. Matthew's Episcopal School Board and Finance Committee, and youth leadership.



JUAN ANTONIO SILVA

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SPANISH

Juan Antonio Silva has been teaching in the World Languages Department for more than eleven years. With a Master of Arts in Latin American Literature, Juan truly enjoys teaching, as every day is a challenge. Juan not only uses what he learned as a student, but he also utilizes present-day topics in his teaching. Thus, he is able to grow both personally and professionally. In addition, he has the opportunity to impact students' lives in a positive way. Juan believes "education is the key that provides success in life." He knows well-educated people not only help themselves but also their families, by building a better society. Juan is grateful to be a part of this process at South Texas College.



DR. MENG-HUNG WU

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

With a Ph.D. in Computer Science, Dr. Meng-Hung Wu has taught with South Texas College's Computer Science and Computer Information Technology Program (CITP) for four years. In these four years, he has participated in various committees related to the college curriculum and Computer Science degree plan. For his dissertation, "A Comparison of Multivariate Granger Causality Based Measures of Effective Connectivity," Dr. Wu worked closely with pediatric physicians using various computer algorithms to determine the brain connectivity difference between kids with and without dyslexia. The finding of his dissertation can help physicians better understand the dyslexia disorder that they may treat patients more effectively. Additionally, Dr. Wu also donates his time and computer skills to a local tennis association that they may maintain their web presence.

★★★ YEARS OF SERVICE ★★★

South Texas College 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 South Texas College 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

Rosana Cecilia Carpio	Developmental Mathematics Instructor
William Carter	Professor of History
Thomas J. Fuschetto.....	English Instructor
Masood Haidarasl.....	Developmental Mathematics Instructor
Mehran Hassanpour	Mathematics Instructor
Delia Magdaleno.....	Spanish Instructor
Saeed Molki.....	Associate Professor of Computer Science
Howard Price	Developmental English Instructor
Melba L. Trevino.....	Interim Dean for Nursing and Allied Health

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

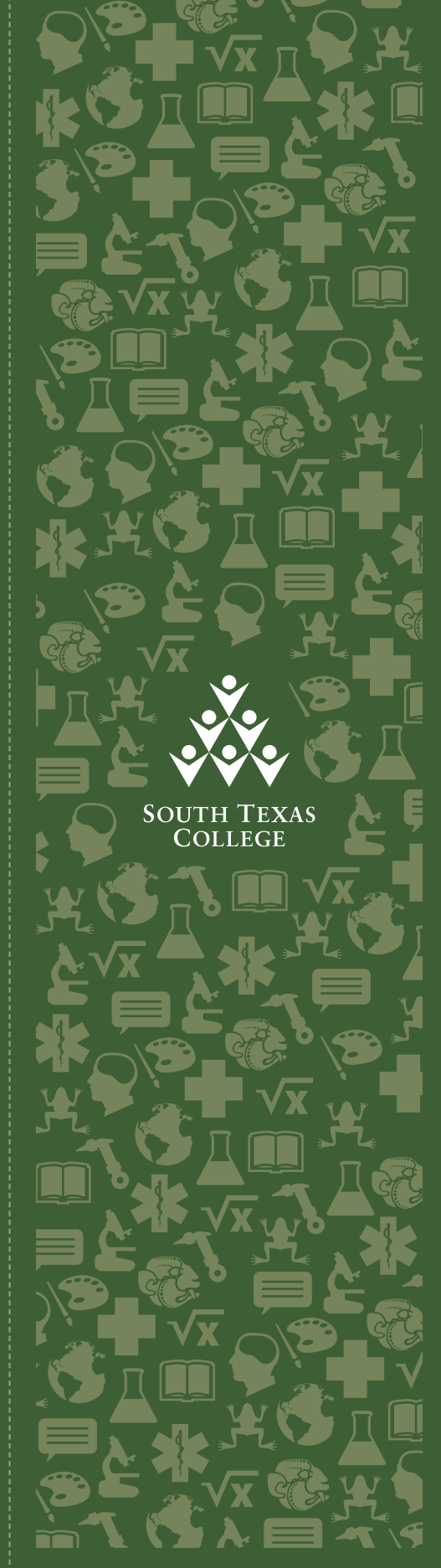
Carolyn Groman Burks.....	English Instructor
Gustavo Garza Cavazos.....	Electronic & Computer Maintenance Instructor
Laura Yvonne De La Vina.....	Associate Professor of Developmental English
Mario Espinoza.....	Spanish Instructor
Mario Estrada.....	Biology Instructor
Miguel Antonio Garcia	Associate Professor of Business Administration
Mahmoud A. Gassem	Physical Science Instructor
Richard G. Getso	Developmental Mathematics Instructor
Bruce David Griffiths.....	Electronic & Computer Maintenance Instructor
Martin W. Knecht	Engineering Instructor
David Lung	Assistant Professor of Developmental Mathematics
Brett Jorge Millán.....	Professor of English
Marcia Mitchell.....	Professor of English
Patricia Pomares.....	Business Computer Systems Instructor
Adalia M. Reyna	Developmental Reading Instructor
Darriall Reynolds.....	Professor of Political Science
Nayef Mohamed Shaath.....	Mathematics Instructor
Dawn Diana Taylor.....	Associate Professor of Speech
Roy Treviño.....	Automotive Technology Instructor
Daniel R. Unruh.....	Automotive Technology Instructor
Joy Lynn Wells.....	Developmental Reading Instructor

10 YEARS OF SERVICE

James B. Barrera.....	Associate Professor of History
Lee Anderson Basham.....	Philosophy Instructor
Karen Sue Countryman	Vocational Nursing Instructor
Kelli Anne Davis	Mathematics Instructor
Javier Garcia	Developmental Mathematics Instructor
Mark R. Murray	Assistant Professor of Political Science
Scott L. Nicol	Assistant Professor of Art
Lily Rajendra Rai	Mathematics Instructor
John Steven Rice.....	History Instructor
Veronica Rodriguez	Assistant Professor of Child Development
Laura Salas	Assistant Professor of CADD
Stevan M. Schiefelbein	Assistant Professor of Developmental English
Sam Yuan Sung.....	Associate Professor of Computer Science
Timothy Raymond Weber.....	Psychology Instructor

FACULTY RETIREES

Dr. Max Abbassi	Biology
Cynthia Cain	Child Development
Isabel Garcia.....	Physical Therapy
Dr. Luis Guerra.....	Biology
Judith Peabody.....	Developmental English
Michele Shell.....	Developmental Mathematics
Ellen Stone.....	History
Melba Treviño.....	Vocational Nursing
Merrie Van Loy.....	Developmental Math
Dr. Jerry Zenor	World Languages



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT 2014-2015