

A Message from the President



The inspiring stories contained in this issue of the DACC Contact! reflect some of the significant contributions to our community made by our students and faculty. While it is a fact that DACC prepares students to enter the workforce, the college also equips them to give back to their community. Many students don't even wait for graduation before they start giving back. In this issue you will read about several of the charitable endeavors students have initiated and taken part in.

Clearly, the good will manifested by the community in supporting this college is recompensed many times over: Not only do the students receive a direct benefit, but they, in turn provide a wealth of benefits to the community.

Our distinguished alumni, outstanding graduates and current students are a source of pride to DACC. The dedicated faculty and staff at the college are another source of pride, for they are the ones who encourage students to overcome obstacles and reach for the stars.

Congratulations to all our students who, prepared for the challenges ahead, enthusiastically enter the workforce. As we wish them a prosperous new year, we also wish them continuing prosperity throughout their careers.

Dr. Margie Huerta, President
Doña Ana Community College

Public Comment Welcome

Since 1973, Doña Ana Community College has been accredited as a branch of New Mexico State University by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges.

The college is now seeking independent accreditation, and will be evaluated by the Higher Learning Commission for initial accreditation April 28–30, 2008.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding DACC's accreditation before March 28, 2008. Third-party comments may be sent to the following address:

Public Comment on
Doña Ana Community College
The Higher Learning Commission
30 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602



At far left, ex-officio members **Ike Ledesma** and **Dr. Margie Huerta**, DACC student services coordinator and DACC president, respectively, join the DACC Development Advisory Council members, from left, **Roberto Estrada**, owner of Roberto's Mexican Food; **Sandy Abernathy**, DACC instructor; **Mary Garza**, CEO of Solar Electric Co.; **Jorge Moy**, owner of Moy Surveying; **Linda Laitner**, retired; **Anna Chieffo**, DACC campus academic officer; **Paul Dulin**, director of the Office of Border Health; and **Erlinda Portillo**, ex-officio member, coordinator of development. Not shown is **Raymond Palacios**, CEO of Bravo Chevrolet-Cadillac-Hummer.

DACC Advisory Council Initiatives

Doña Ana Community College's new Development Advisory Council plays an important role in assessing the mission and purpose of fundraising and advocating on behalf of the institution.

"Advisory councils can provide excellent opportunities to engage alumni and other prospective donors in the work of the development effort," said Erlinda Portillo, coordinator of development. "When alumni and other potential donors serve as participants on advisory councils, it creates opportunities for them to learn about the financial needs of the institution and [for DACC to] enlist their support."

The council will advise the institution's development department in its fundraising initiatives, provide input as to potential donors and supporters, and be a steward of its endowments. The council also will advocate for DACC by communicating the mission and purpose of the institution and its fiduciary responsibilities.

The Development Advisory Council will meet at least three times a year to review financial and fundraising reports, provide input from the community, and receive updates on scholarships and endowments. In addition, new ideas and initiatives may be introduced and discussed.

Recent scholarship fundraising activities



Native American artist Amado M. Peña Jr., greeting a student at left, visited Las Cruces for a third time to raise money for student scholarships. At center, a first-ever **Celebrity Benefit Golf Tournament and Celebration Dance** raised nearly \$11,000 for future development activities. At right, **Susan Pinkerton** and **Linda Luján** stand next to a portrait of longtime DACC library employee **Patsy Hernández**. A memorial scholarship in **Hernández's** name raises money for Library Technology students.

Fall 2007 Outstanding Graduates as named by the NMSU Alumni Association



Tiffanee Ivery
Associate of Business
Office Technology
Business and Information
Systems Division



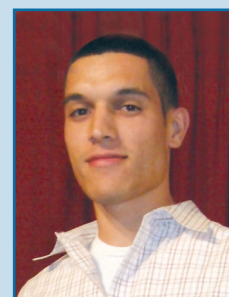
Marcela Ríos
Associate Degree
in General Studies
General Studies
Division



Jayne McIlrath
Associate Degree
in Nursing
Health and Public
Services Division



Alicia Bustillos
Digital Graphics
Technology
Technical
and Industrial
Studies Division



Brandon Paniagua
Associate Degree
in General Studies
White Sands Center

Octogenarian honored as ABE Student of Year

Josephine Balizán has had a long life of ups and downs, but one thing she's sure of: When you have your education, no one can ever take it away from you.

She is the fall 2007 semester's Adult Basic Education Student of the Year and, as such, will be among those considered as the New Mexico ABE Student of the Year at the next New Mexico Adult Education Association Conference.

DACC ABE Division Dean **Sylvia Durán Nickerson** says she and her staff appreciate 80-year-old Balizán's unwavering determination.



Josephine Balizán

"Her dedication and commitment as a returning adult learner is of no surprise to the ABE Division staff," Nickerson said. "Josie is the epitome of the ABE learner and one of the important reasons ABE exists. She is a prime example of one among thousands of other adults who made the decision to return to school to learn and develop her skills after living life with struggles, obstacles to success and many, many challenges."

Although she injured her back and leg, Balizán continues to take classes three times a week at the DACC Quintana Learning Center. Surviving the Great Depression, losing everything to drought, family crises, and raising on her own five children — all of whom hold NMSU degrees — Balizán strives on.

During the awards ceremony, Balizán shared with the audience that sometime earlier she had mentioned the idea of not studying anymore to her son, who scolded, "No, you can't quit. Your brain will quit working."

She's a testament to the fact that it's never too late to learn and grow, Nickerson said. "Despite her many obstacles, she has not lost sight of her goal to complete her education and set the example for others."

Accreditation site visit is positive



Sonography Director Darla Matthew, stands at left with **Instructor Lydia Tamez-Smiley**, and site visitors **Dr. Felicia Toreno** and **Sue Ovel**, seated.

"A very positive experience" was reported by Sonography Program Director **Darla Matthew** after a site visit by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs.

"Of the extensive review of our program, they reported a number of strengths, and only minor findings for correction. We are looking forward to the formal response and are hoping for a new five-year cycle for our next site visit," Matthew said.

The site visit team spent two days reviewing documents, visiting several clinical sites, and interviewing administration, faculty and students.

Although the site visitors do not make recommendations, they report their findings to the Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. This committee then reports to CAAHEP, which determines accreditation.



Mary Sletten

Sletten named to national council

Associate Professor of Nursing Mary Sletten, DM(c), MSN, RN, is one of only seven persons in the nation to be appointed to

the Pathways to Excellence Council through the American Nurses Association.

In the four-year appointment to the national governing council, Sletten will be involved in setting up all of the policies and procedures, and running the program.

Pathways to Excellence is devoted to improving the working environment of nurses while, at the same time, retaining the nurse force, and ultimately improving overall patient care. Nurse retention has been identified as one of the factors of the nursing shortage.

New Mexico will be the pilot project for this program, which is being based on the Nurse Friendly project of Texas.

Smaller, rural hospitals and their communities will benefit from Pathways to Excellence.

Distinguished alumni honored

Edward G. López, Paul Chávez and Daniel J. Young were honored as Distinguished Alumni in an autumn ceremony.

López, one of the first graduates of the Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Program in 1980, owns Superior Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration with his wife, Liz. He also has taught in the program since 1988 and serves on its advisory committee.

Chávez, Doña Ana County fire marshal since 2004, holds an associate degree in Fire Science Technology from DACC and teaches in the program part time. He also is a graduate of the elite Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy in Maryland.

Young graduated in Computer Technology in 1998 and now is business systems analyst with Media News Group/Gannett and Las Cruces Publishing Co.

All three hold many other honors and awards in their fields.

Students make holidays brighter for less fortunate

Several student groups have undertaken drives of different types to make the holidays brighter for the less fortunate. Among those are the following.

- A new student club, the Grapevine Association, held a new-blanket drive for the needy. They were delivered to local community shelters.
- The Grapevine Association also sent approximately 600 Christmas cards signed by staff and students to servicemembers in the Middle East. Day's Hallmark, as well as individuals, donated the cards.
- The Radiologic Technology Club had a drop-off box for Toys for Tots and collected until the last day of the fall semester.
- After a successful Thanksgiving food drive, the Gadsden Roadrunners, a club at the DACC Gadsden Center, conducted a blanket drive for Christmas.
- Phi Theta Kappa is collecting textbooks that students are unable to sell back to the bookstores at either DACC or NMSU. The books, no older than five years, are being collected to support the National Center for Family Literacy. PTK receives \$.50 for each book collected. PTK students elected to participate in this charity.
- The Lerdo Student Exchange Club held a coat drive for the needy. The club collected coats, sweaters, hats and gloves at the Central Campus and at the East Mesa Campus. Members took the donated items to Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México, for distribution to the needy.



Vietnam War Veteran Franklin P. Green, a DACC student, selects from many colorful Christmas cards and writes his message to an Armed Forces member serving in the Middle East. The Grapevine Association, a student organization, set up the donated cards in the Commons Area so that faculty, staff and students could sign cards prior to sending them overseas.



Left, Lou Hendren, Las Cruces Sun-News classified advertising manager, accepts on behalf of Paul J. Young, right, with Edward G. López and Paul Chávez at the ceremony.



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For more information go to our Web site
<http://dacc.nmsu.edu>



contact!

A newsletter for the friends of Doña Ana Community College | WINTER 2008

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Graduate answers higher calling

A lifetime strongly affected by periods of caring for family members and others, and the fulfillment derived from helping people in need, led Jayne McIlrath into the field of nursing. She has been selected as the Health and Public Service Division's Outstanding Graduate for the fall 2007 semester.

McIlrath, who has completed the Associate Degree in Nursing, says she can't believe she's finished with her studies.

"I have obtained an excellent education from highly capable instructors," said McIlrath, who considers the level of instruction and support from instructors and staff "a gift."

Now that she's a graduate, her goal is to work at La Clinica de Familia, where she completed a preceptorship.

Her husband, Marc, and family members "rode the roller coaster with me. Being in the Nursing Program is very much a roller coaster, but it's our own self-fears, doubts, and internal insecurities — not the program itself or the people involved — that make it a roller coaster," McIlrath said.



Division Dean David Pearse with Outstanding Graduate Jayne McIlrath of the Nursing Program.

"At times you think you're never going to get through it, but instructors and support staff won't let you give up," she said. "They are awesome — they keep you going!"

McIlrath completed her GED in 2003, and says the day she drove to DACC and ended up inside the Quintana Learning Center to sign up for GED classes, she had not intended on doing so.

Some strong, unknown force led her to DACC back then, and now she will be giving back to the community even more than before by putting her caring nature and well-practiced skills to good use for the benefit of others.



Paul Herzog, CEO of Memorial Medical Center, addresses the graduating class with positive words of encouragement.

DACC graduates nurses

No seats were left empty at the NMSU Music Center Recital Hall when the Fall 2007 Nursing graduates had their pinning ceremony.

Family members showed their support with cheers and flashing cameras. Some in the audience remarked that it was the most beautiful pinning ceremony they'd attended.

"Overall, I think the ceremony was a beautiful ending of a long struggle by all of the students," said graduate Jayne McIlrath.

Update on Allied Health Programs

- Preliminary details have been completed to launch a physical therapy assistant program.
- In support of DACC's two dental programs — Dental Assistant and Dental Hygienist, a large section of former classrooms is being converted into a lab, where community members will receive services, while students gain experience.
- The Nursing Program curriculum is being enhanced to better equip the nursing workforce.