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# Maxim

VOLUME 2, No. 3

NORTH HARRIS MONTGOMERY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

SUMMER 1994

## Planning a great career? See us first

**F**or most college students enrolled in degree or certificate programs, education is the means to an end, and that end is a rewarding, well-paying job. While transfer to universities is a primary focus in the North Harris Montgomery Community College District, the District's colleges offer a number of services and initiatives designed specifically to help students find immediate employment.

more with instructors and advisors," said North Harris College Counselor Gloria Mallett.

### Check with Career Placement

Students looking for part- or full-time jobs often find them through the colleges' Career Placement offices. According to Luciano Salinas, Director of Career Placement, at North Harris College 2, 131 students looking for work signed into the Career Placement office between January and April 1994; during the same period, 568 employers listed jobs. In addition, 35 companies visited the college to recruit directly.

One person who found her job through Career Placement is Debra Curtis, who graduated from North Harris College in 1990 with an associate of applied science in accounting. Curtis says that about a week after she visited the office and Salinas faxed her résumé to F.B. Dunn & Associates, the company called her in for a series of interviews. "I found out on a Thursday I was to start the job on the Monday after graduation," says Curtis, now the Accounting Manager for F.B. Dunn.

### Job Fairs can benefit

Another way to bring employees and employers together is through job fairs, such as one Kingwood College hosted in May. Larry Shemroske, Sales Manager for Lincoln National Life Insurance Co., one of the companies at the job fair, believes it's important to recruit recent college graduates. "We need young people in this industry," he says. "We want a presence at the colleges, and we want the students to know they're wanted and needed."

In addition to benefiting college students, high school seniors from five Humble Independent School District schools were bused to the event.

### Internships provide experience

Internships provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience and often lead to full-time jobs after graduation. Dr. George Younger, Instructor of Veterinary Technology at Tomball College, says vet tech interns are always in demand by hospitals, research institutions and veterinary clinics. "The internship is a direct application of what the students learn at college," Younger says.

Another opportunity for students to gain work experience is through co-op programs. "We want to become a real player in co-op education," says Penny

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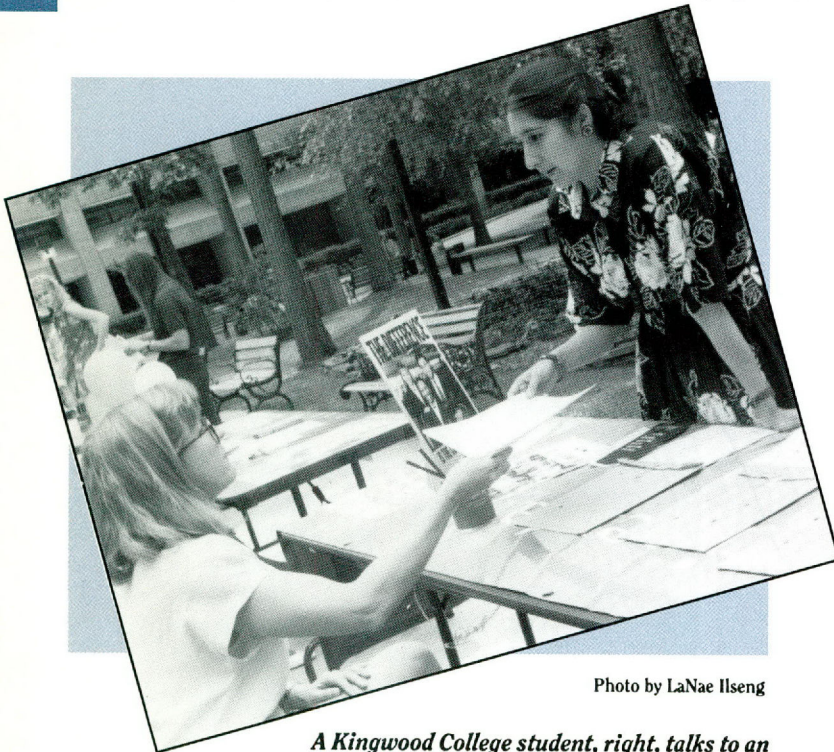


Photo by LaNae Ilseing

*A Kingwood College student, right, talks to an employer during Kingwood College's job fair in April. The job fair is one of many ways the District helps students find jobs.*

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beyond academics

### Begin by planning ahead

The colleges' Career Planning Centers can get students started on the right career path by helping them determine the types of occupations that match their abilities and interests. An interactive computer system allows students to enter information about job preferences and interests, and the computer then lists careers (and how much those careers are in demand) within the students' parameters. The Career Planning Office also helps students learn how to network and write résumés. "We help students focus on things they can do to prepare themselves for the work force — part-time work, taking courses related to their field of interest, and talking



# FREDI<sup>®</sup> is ready with easy access to information vital to businesses

*'FREDI<sup>®</sup> will allow businesses and organizations to make good, informed decisions, which is critical for their success.'*

*Ray Laughter, Executive Director of NHMCCD's Center for Business and Economic Development.*

**Y**ou'd like to open a clothes store in the FM 1960 /I-45 area that carries teen fashions, but you need to do some basic research first. You call the chamber of commerce and ask some questions, such as how many teenagers live in the area and what the median income of their parents are.

Until a few months ago, most area chambers wouldn't have had such information readily available. But now the chambers can access a host of demographic information, thanks to a unique software program developed by the North Harris Montgomery Community College District.

## *A unique software called FREDI<sup>®</sup>*

The software, called FREDI<sup>®</sup> (Fast Retrieval of Economic Development Information) provides decision support and basic research and planning information for the business community, according to Ray Laughter, Executive Director of NHMCCD's Center for Business and Economic Development.

The program was written by Dr. Michael Green, Associate Vice Chancellor of Research and Planning. According to Laughter, FREDI<sup>®</sup> is the first software of its kind in the United States.

Among other things, FREDI<sup>®</sup> will provide quick access to demographic information in a specific zip code or group of zip codes and the ability to respond to prospective business requests for market potential.

"I'm excited about FREDI<sup>®</sup> because it will allow businesses and organizations to make good, informed decisions, which is critical for their success," Laughter said. "One of the biggest reasons new businesses fail is a lack of good information about their markets."

## *New tool allows quick retrieval of data*

Laughter said the information contained in FREDI<sup>®</sup> is, for the most part, taken from census data and is available at public libraries. However, FREDI<sup>®</sup> will eliminate the time-consuming process of visiting libraries and poring over volumes of data to find the exact information needed, he said.

"Although FREDI<sup>®</sup> is tailored to the needs of chambers of commerce, it is also of value to education providers or anyone interested in the demographic and economic basis of the region," Laughter said. "Much of the data provided with FREDI<sup>®</sup> is either expensive to buy individually or is difficult to analyze.

"This tool provides both the access to the data and the ability to generate complex reports on demand."

Laughter said the next phase of FREDI<sup>®</sup> will be to add data on businesses, which will be provided by the Texas Employment Commission. The data will include such information as lists of employers and occupations with corresponding employment levels, he said.

The development of FREDI<sup>®</sup> is a result of a joint resolution signed in March 1993 by 11 area chambers of commerce and the college district, which designated NHMCCD as a clearinghouse for demographic and other economic development information.

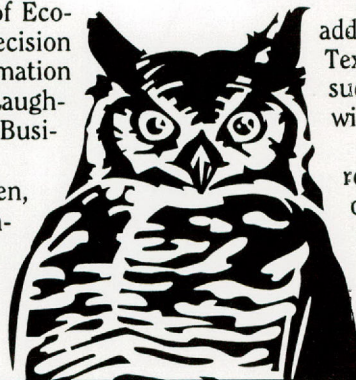
Not all of the chambers had the computers needed to run FREDI<sup>®</sup>, so the Compaq Computer Foundation pitched in by donating 486-50 computers to each of the chambers.

The donation is worth \$23,000, Laughter said.

"NHMCCD and the chamber officers are important in the growth of north Houston," said

Jerry Welch, Vice President of Human Resources for Compaq and President of the Compaq

Computer Foundation. "We are pleased to support their efforts to make this critical information available to current and potential businesses." ★



*FREDI<sup>®</sup> is copyrighted by the North Harris Montgomery Community College District.*





## Message from the chancellor

*Dr. John E. Pickelman*

### The University Center: Creating more choices for the community

**T**he North Harris Montgomery Community College District's commitment to bring greater opportunities for higher education was underscored recently by the Board of Trustee's adoption of a resolution to establish The University Center on the site of Montgomery College's permanent campus at Needham Road and I-45. The resolution states that the District will seek partnerships with interested Texas universities to create The University Center.

Representatives from the District presented the preliminary plans for the proposed university center in January at the quarterly meeting of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The District has been holding discussions about The University Center with Texas A&M University, the University of Houston, Rice University, Texas Southern University, Sam Houston State University and Prairie View A&M University.

#### Greater access to education

Through The University Center, citizens in north Houston and Montgomery County will have greatly improved access to postsecondary education at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers. The University Center utilizes an education/business partnership as an organizing principle upon which further developments can be built. The universities will not offer competing programs, ensuring the widest possible variety of baccalaureate degrees.

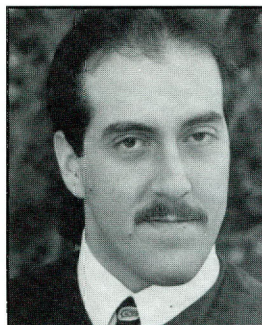
Surveys have shown that relatively few students continue to pursue degrees when they have to drive 30 or more minutes to attend classes. The concept of a university center isn't just shifting students; The University Center will provide opportunities for those with no other choices.

The University Center, which could open as soon as 1996, will complement the partnerships the District has formed with Our Lady of the Lake University and Houston Baptist University, which offer master's degree programs on the campuses of North Harris College and Kingwood College, respectively. We look forward to the day when the citizens in our service area can attain associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees without leaving the boundaries of the college District. ★

# Profiles

## Q: As a graduate, why would you recommend the District's colleges to new students?

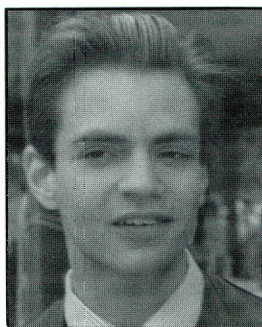
**Eduardo Garcia**, associate of arts degree in general studies, Montgomery College.



"It's a good beginning for a transfer student. The District's colleges offer a more intimate atmosphere with more individual atten-

tion from the instructors."

**Chris Whitten**, associate of applied science degree in respiratory therapy, Kingwood College.



"I'd recommend Kingwood College because it's got a great campus. The learning atmosphere

and the instructors really are excellent."

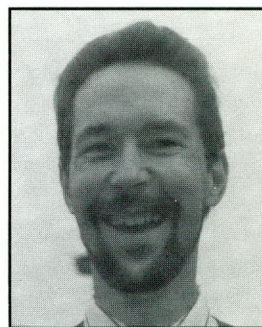
**Lorenya Tolbert**, associate of arts degree in general studies, North Harris College.



"I think it's the personal attention you get. The instructors make themselves available before and after class. I had an English in-

structor who took the time to meet with us individually about a research paper.

**Richard Jensen**, associate of applied science degree in accounting, Tomball College.



"It's more accessible than a four-year school. NHMCCD has an open admissions policy, which makes it easier

for a broad range of students to have an opportunity at higher education."

## Maxim

### North Harris Montgomery Community College District

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to inform the community-at-large of all the great things happening in the North Harris Montgomery Community College District.

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# Forensics team brings home the honors... again

*Forensics students Charity Lakey, left, and Durrell Perry, demonstrate their forensics technique.*



Photo by Deborah Spenella

**T**hey're the few. The proud. The North Harris College forensics team. The six students enrolled in North Harris College's forensics team, under the direction of Speech Professor Sherri White and part-time Speech Instructor Wade Hescht, earned a reputation for excellence during the 1993-94 academic year. That reputation was gained through countless hours of hard work and the professional manner in which the students conducted themselves at tournaments.

While the students were few, the honors were many (141 trophies and awards, to be exact). At the American Forensics Association tournament in April, NHC finished in the top 20 percent and outscored such universities as Rice, UCLA, Michigan, the Air Force Academy and Seton Hall. Earlier that month, NHC finished sixth (out of 88 schools) in the *Phi Rho Pi* national forensics tournament for junior and community colleges.

NHC captured gold medals at the *Phi Rho Pi* Reader's Theatre nationals in 1992 and again this year, making it the only Texas college to have ever won two golds, says White, who has taught at NHC for 17 years.

"These are extremely dedicated, self-disciplined and committed students," White says. "I expect that they give their very best and nothing else, and they know it."

The demanding preparation for competition begins in the summer and includes weekly class and individual time spent with White. "Emotionally, she (White) pushes us really hard," says Colleen Brock, a psychology student. "Ms. White is very serious about what she does," adds Carey Perry, a musical theater major. "She knows what it takes to win, and she does what she can to help you accomplish it."

Forensics events are divided into two broad categories: public address and interpretation. Specific types of speeches include informative, persuasive, extemporaneous and analytical. In an extemporaneous speech, students have just 30 minutes to research a topic and prepare a speech.

During tournaments, students are judged on such criteria as the literary merit of a selection, how well they have analyzed the work and how polished they are. For extemporaneous and impromptu speeches, the timeliness of documentation is also considered. Groups of six students compete (one student from each school), and judges assign them a point score (1-25, with 25 being the best) and rank them (1-6, with 1 being the best).

There's more to preparing for the tournaments than selecting literature, keeping up with current events and rehearsing speeches, however. White wants the students to have every possible edge, so during tournaments she prohibits them from eating or drinking things that contain sugar, caffeine, or dairy products because they can slightly diminish a student's speaking performance.

In keeping with a polished image, White requires women to wear dresses and high heels and men to don suits and ties. "I'm known to have them bring their outfits to my office for approval," she says with a smile. "But you can spot North Harris College students; from the moment they get off the van, they have an attitude of friendliness and professionalism."

White believes the benefits from the forensics class transcend trophies. "I'm not really after winning — I'm after them growing and presenting themselves well," she says.

With six people traveling together and sharing the same intense academic experiences, it's inevitable that close friendships would develop. "We're just like a family, people you can turn to with your problems," says theater major Durrell Perry.

Despite the hard work, there's also time for fun. On van trips, the students sing, but White says they beg her not to join in. The reason? "Sometimes," theater major Charity Lakey jokes, "she gets the words right." ★

*'I expect that they give their very best and nothing else, and they know it.'*

*Sherri White,  
Speech Professor*



# The one-stop college shop expands

**G**ot the shopping list ready... let's see now. New shirt, casual jeans, new jogging shoes, toys for the kids... and a history class.

A history class?

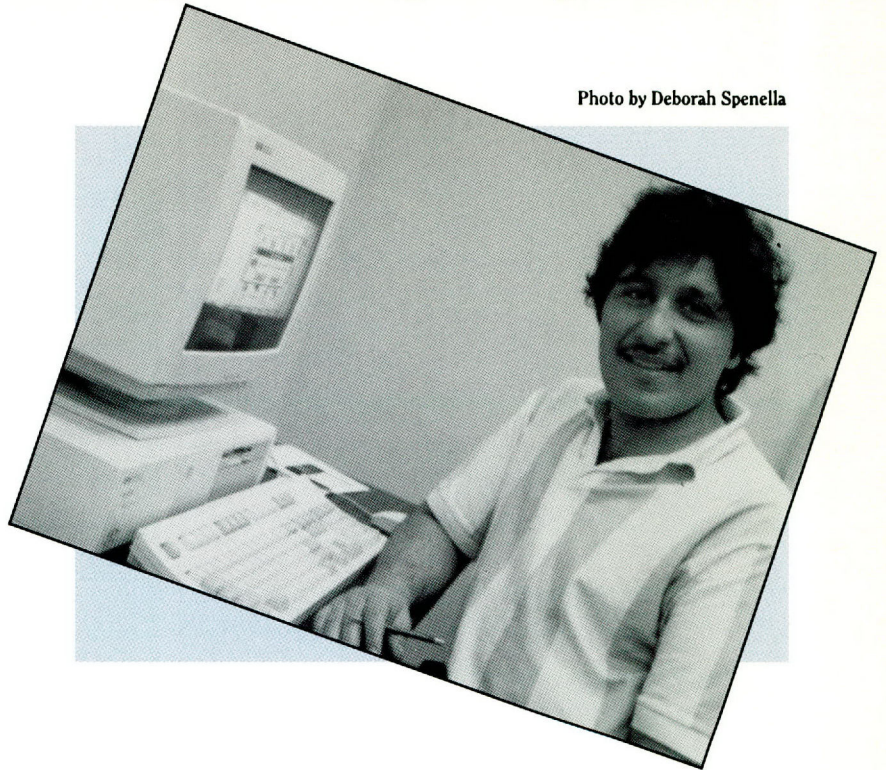
Why not? Kingwood College's Humble Center at Deerbrook Mall, which has been open for less than a year, is expanding its selection of credit courses and offering some innovative ways for busy working people to work toward an associate's degree or certificate of competency.

Beginning this fall, the center will be the site of 30 credit classes, including history, English, mathematics and computer courses.

"In addition to the community education courses, we want to expand our credit offerings," says Dr. Rose Austin, Dean of Educational Resources and the newly appointed Director of the Humble Center.

The Humble Center has three classrooms, but Austin says she's hoping to effectively increase the center's capacity by negotiating with mall merchants to hold some courses in retailers' training rooms. "This would be a good opportunity for us to develop partnerships with the retailers," she says. Austin believes some retailers would be receptive to the idea because the college can offer classes geared

Photo by Deborah Spenella



*Kingwood College biotechnology major Rashid Ghafoor takes a moment away from his studies in a summer Introduction to Computers course at the Humble Center at Deerbrook Mall.*

Looking for art, sports, computers, sailing?

## Ask (CE) and you shall receive

In the movie *Field of Dreams*, the voice speaking to farmer Ray Kinsella says, "Build it and he will come." When it comes to community education at Kingwood College, the motto could be, "If you come, we'll build it."

Community education courses at the college range from computers to painting to athletic camps for children. According to Diane Blanco, Community Education Program Coordinator, if there's sufficient interest in a course that's not in the schedule, the college will create the course.

"We keep an extensive list of the classes that have been requested," says Blanco, who has been nicknamed "Kingwood College's walking billboard" because of her unflagging enthusiasm about the college. "If we have enough students who want a particular class, we can build it, even in the middle of a semester."

Among the students who have taken community education courses at the college are 93-year-old Eola Barron, a retired nurse, and her granddaughter, Gay Riggs. For Barron, enrolling in a T-shirt decorating course at the Humble Center marked her first college courses of any kind in 73 years.

"I love art, and everyone here is so congenial," Barron says. "I love to work and do things. I was born in 1900, and the Lord has kept me walking all these years.

"I've come a long way, baby."

toward retail employee development, and students would become more familiar with those stores and be more likely to purchase items from them.

New scheduling will make it even easier for some people to attend courses. Austin says management and other courses will be offered at 8 a.m., before the mall opens. This will allow mall employees to more conveniently take classes.

Another new scheduling approach is offering blocks of back-to-back courses. Such subjects as English, mathematics and history may be offered consecutively two days a week, and back-to-back management courses are planned for some evenings.

"We want the Humble Center to be a one-stop shop," Austin says. "People can do their course work here, register for courses anywhere in the District, receive academic advising here and financial aid assistance, as well."

Although no complete degree plans are currently available at the Humble Center, Austin says she is exploring the possibility of the center offering a retail management associate's degree, and educational assistant and nurse's assistant certificates exclusively at the mall. ★

*Kingwood College's Humble Center at Deerbrook Mall offers a wide range of credit and noncredit classes.*



# Writing on the info superhighway

**W**ith Vice President Al Gore's emphasis on establishing an information superhighway, it's only appropriate that at Tomball College recently, Hillary Clinton sent electronic-mail messages to Winston Churchill and Mickey Mouse.

OK, it's not *the* Hillary Clinton, Winston Churchill or Mickey Mouse. But those were a few of the pseudonyms used by college students and seventh graders in a joint project between Tomball College and Tomball Junior High School. Tomball College English Instructor Larry Clark dubbed it "The Gatsby Project" because students were assigned to read F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby* and discuss the book via electronic mail.

Clark, who took the idea from a League of Innovation Conference he attended in 1992, began using computers in his English class at Texas A&M and continued when he came to Tomball College in January 1992. "I began using e-mail as an electronic means of promoting discussion outside the classroom," he said. "Students use e-mail to communicate outside normal classroom hours, then continue the discussion in class."

students, and made college less mysterious and intimidating. "We were able to say what we wanted without the intimidation of facing students (directly) who were older than we were," says seventh-grade student Andrew Fuqua. "I've also learned enough about modems to start a new hobby."

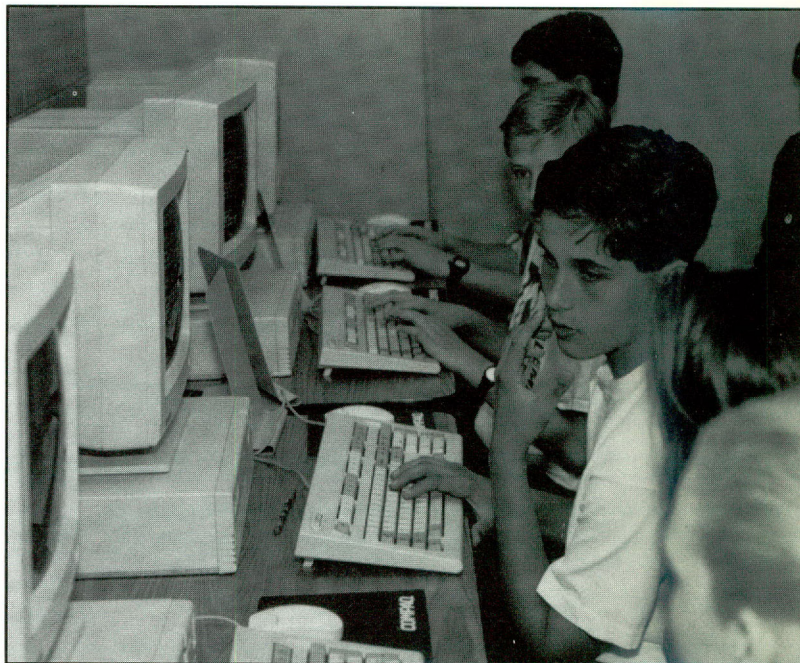
The seventh graders weren't the only ones to benefit intellectually from the exchange. Clark notes that one college student told him about the four messages he found most intriguing; although the student didn't know it, all four came from junior high students.

"I was just kind of amazed at the response that we got from both groups," Clark says. "Some of them would get so into the discussion, writing messages that would be several pages long."

Photo by Bob Wright

*'We were able to say what we wanted without the intimidation of facing students (directly) who were older than we were.'*

*Andrew Fuqua, student, Tomball Jr. High School*



*Students from Tomball Junior High School participate in "The Gatsby Project." The project uses electronic mail to promote discussion and thought.*

The pseudonyms, while injecting some humor into the project, added an even more important dimension: anonymity.

"The students could discuss the book without being aware of the race, gender, social class or religion of the people they were talking to," Clark says. "The project helped students who normally wouldn't have participated much in a typical classroom. Through the computer, every person who is participating, including the professor or teacher, is reduced to text on the screen."

Students sent copies of their essays to a "peer editing group" consisting of three or four of their classmates. "In this way," Clark says, "students were able to give each other feedback on essays, as well as from relationships with me, the entire class and within their peer group."

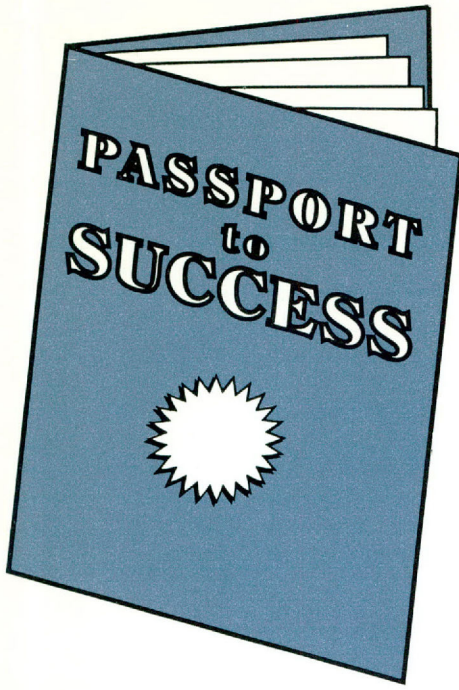
According to Clark, the project helped boost the confidence and writing ability of the junior high

Most of the discussions were left up to students, although Clark sent the students some specific questions to ponder, such as analyzing the role of the three women in the novel. Clark plans to write about the project as part of a doctoral dissertation and will try to determine whether the project helped improve students' grades and writing ability.

"The Gatsby Project" may be only the beginning of courses that use electronic mail to promote discussion and thought. Next semester, the project will be expanded to include an English class from Tomball High School.

Says Clark: "We are hoping that other discussion-oriented courses, such as philosophy, history and government, will begin to make use of this exciting new technology." ★





# Bridging the gap to success

*'I get excited about the subjects, and then the students are excited to try the methods in the book.'*

*Karen Murphy, Coordinator of Student Support Services*

While he has no current plans to make the course mandatory for students, Law says it's important for students to possess the basic student "how-to" skills before receiving specific academic assistance. "If test anxiety is the problem for students taking an algebra course, we can help them build math skills for weeks, but we'd better address the anxiety problem first," he says.

The course, which costs students only \$10, comes with a textbook/workbook and includes strategies on memorization, test taking, reading and using college resources. "This course teaches students things they would only learn otherwise by trial and error," says Karen Murphy, Coordinator of Student Support Services, who teaches the course.

## *Learning basic how-to skills*

In addition to the units dealing with academic preparation, there's a section on using community services. Law says that during this unit, special speakers including Conroe Mayor Carter Moore, Conroe Independent School District Superintendent David Lusk, a representative from a local hospital wellness center and business leaders speak to the classes and discuss current topics (getting and keeping jobs, wellness, and community leadership and participation.)

Murphy says such things as time management and study skills are areas many students need improvement in. "Everyone in the spring semester class had some of the same struggles, so they didn't feel like they were the only ones or that they were failures," she says.

## *Strategies to deal with problems*

The textbook for the course, Murphy says, offers a variety of strategies for dealing with each problem. "I learn things from the book every time I open it," she says. "There's an entire unit, for example, on stress management. That's something we all need."

Murphy says she's looking forward to teaching the course again this fall.

"I get excited about the subjects, and then the students are excited to try the methods in the book," she says. ★

**T**he Houston Rockets have been crowned NBA champions, but as good as Hakeem Olajuwon & Co. can rebound, dribble and shoot, if they didn't actually have a basketball, the Rockets would just be a bunch of guys going through the motions.

Similarly, college students who possess the ability to learn subjects, but don't know how to take advantage of college resources, study for a test, manage their time or discuss a problem with an instructor, often have trouble making good grades. Montgomery College is helping bridge the gap between potential and real academic success with a non-credit course called Passport to Success. The course, which meets one hour per week during the spring and fall semesters, complements Montgomery College President Bill Law's philosophy of serving students beyond the traditional academic classroom.

## *The concept behind success*

A major component of that philosophy is the college's Academic Support Laboratory, which is staffed with instructors, computers and other study aids. But Law says those resources are virtually useless for students who need non-cognitive development. "One of the real problems we have is that some students won't approach instructors for help," he says. "If we don't help these students learn interpersonal skills and such things as how to manage their time, the cognitive help we offer them won't be of much use."

Law says that the concept behind the Passport to Success class has always been a part of the planning for the new Montgomery College campus, which is scheduled to open in fall 1995. However, he felt it would be too late to wait until then to begin the class and started a pilot of the course this past spring. "If it's a good idea then (when the new campus opens)," Law says, "it's a good idea now."



# Career planning

Continued from page 1

Westerfeld, Kingwood College Technology Division Head. "We believe that on-the-job training should be an integral part of all our career and technical programs." Students in the District who participate in co-op programs work for about 20 hours per week and attend class once a week. They are also required to complete four management-type projects during the semester.

Debbie Adams, Kingwood College Travel & Tourism Instructor, says her students' projects have included establishing travel brochure libraries, compiling policy and procedures manuals and redesigning employee evaluation sheets. She believes such projects give students valuable management experience. "A student can easily become an assistant manager in a small travel agency if he or she is diligent and uses the co-op to the best of his or her ability," Adams says.

## Community Job Institutes

Montgomery College is responding to the employment needs of its students — and the entire community — by holding several Community Jobs Institutes. These 40-hour pre-employment courses

are designed to prepare people to work in the booming retail market in Montgomery County. With the opening this fall of The Woodlands Mall and the expansion of the Outlet Center in Conroe, 2,300 retail jobs are expected to be added to the area, says Karen Murphy, Montgomery College Coordinator of Student Services, who is organizing the employment institute.

"Students and other community members are capable, but sometimes they just need a little help," Murphy says. The employment institute will include training in résumé writing, interviewing, customer relations and operating cash registers. Murphy says the institute is a joint effort of the college and several community-service organizations. ★

*'... sometimes they [the students] just need a little help.'*

*Karen Murphy, Montgomery College  
Coordinator of Student Services*

## Calendar of events

★ **July 13**  
Summer II registration

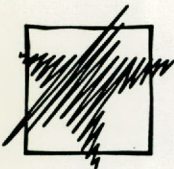
★ **July 14**  
Summer II classes begin

★ **Aug. 23-24**  
Fall registration

★ **Aug. 27**  
Weekend College begins

★ **Aug. 29**  
All other classes begin

★ **Sept. 5**  
Labor Day holiday  
(college offices open)



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Tomball, Texas 77375-4036  
(713) 351-3300

### Montgomery ★ College

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