

MAGAZINE SPRING 2010

Austin College

theIDEAcenter

Novel Pleasures

As I write this, JanTerm is coming to an end and our students and faculty will be returning from travels around the globe. In a very few days we all will be collected back on campus to begin the adventure of the spring term. I have learned that January is an important time in the yearly cycle of Austin College. It is a time for catching a breath, having a new experience, and getting connected with things that keep us grounded. One of those things for me is finding time to read fiction.

Few pleasures compare with the discovery of a truly great novel. In the past month or so I've been delighted to stumble on three: *The Housekeeper and the Professor* (by Yoko Ogawa, translated from Japanese by Stephen Snyder), *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* (by Muriel Barbery, translated from French by Alison Anderson), and *36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction* (by Rebecca Goldstein). These are three beautiful novels, from three different countries, and each one has been profoundly thought-provoking. Although they tell very different kinds of stories, and although each carries elements of tragedy as well as comedy, they share a wisdom and a irrepressible sense of sacred play. These novels share a common theme as well: the way that Holiness continually reveals itself to us despite our best attempts to reason it away. As Elizabeth Barrett Browning tells us, "Earth is crammed with Heaven." These books reminded me of some different and surprising ways that is true. If you've read any of these books, I'd love to hear your thoughts on them.



I can hardly wait for the excitement of the new term; so many things will come to fruition in the months ahead. We will honor Muhammad Yunus with the 2010 Austin College Posey Leadership Award, mark 100 years of basketball with a weekend of games and celebrations, move fundraising into high gear for our new IDEA Center (read more inside this issue), and gather for our annual law symposium (newly named in honor of Professor Emeritus Kenneth Street).

Yet, in the midst of these and other wonders, I am mindful of the shadow side of the spring term. In this economic climate, with an endowment that remains battered by the stock market drop of last year and a student population that finds it harder than ever to afford tuition, we will be faced with difficult choices as we seek to balance our budget. As I face the various dragons that stand between Austin College and its forward movement, I take great comfort in the many friends and alumni who continue to commit their energies, time, and resources to Austin College so that we may realize our shared vision of changing the world through liberal arts education.

We need each of you. When I sit across the table from people who have the ability to make a significant gift to the College, the first question I often am asked is, "What percentage of your alumni make an annual gift to the College?" At the moment, my answer is, "Our alumni giving rate hovers at about 30 percent." That is not a number that inspires excitement—great liberal arts colleges regularly top 50 percent.

I think the reason our giving rate fails to match the rate of enthusiasm and love our alumni feel for Austin College, is that many of you are convinced that the only gifts that matter are the large ones. I can assure you that we certainly need big gifts, but just as important, we need the many smaller gifts that improve our overall giving rate and that together add up to significant support for the College. I encourage everyone who cares about Austin College to become an annual donor. Your regular support makes a real difference for Austin College. We make it easy for you to add your name to our list of annual donors. You can visit the College's Web site right now and make a gift, mail a gift in the reply envelope included in this magazine, or contact our office of Institutional Advancement to learn the many ways you can structure your annual giving.

Please keep this great College in your conversations. Visit us when you can. Watch for the unveiling of our new Web site sometime in March. Let us know about talented students for whom Austin College might be a good match. And—since January comes around every year—send me the names of some of your favorite books so I can add them to my reading list.

Best,

Marjorie



Austin College is again atop study abroad ranking.

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We're Blushing

The recently published Honor Roll of Donors recognizes individuals whose gifts allow Austin College to attain its goals of academic excellence and educational access. Within that report, the Emily Austin Society honors donors whose level of generosity has had significant impact on the success of the College. We deeply regret the omission on that roster of Bill and Beverly Warren, whose support of Austin College is tremendously important. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the Honor Roll of Donors. We appreciate every donor of the College; please make us aware of omissions or errors.

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**AUSTIN
COLLEGE**

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Senior Awarded Competitive Research Grant

Anne Gunter '10 has been awarded a Grant-in-Aid of Research from Sigma Xi, the international honor society of science and engineering. The grant program has a highly competitive application process and only approximately 20 percent of applicants receive funding.

Her research focuses on understanding how the nuclear proteasome activator, PA28y, regulates programmed cell death, or apoptosis. PA28y is a protein that has the capability of facilitating the degradation of other proteins and, in doing so, regulates the cell cycle and apoptosis. The ability to dual-regulate these important cellular processes demonstrates PA28y's unique potential in developing cancer treatments. Much of Anne's research focuses on deciphering the mechanism by which PA28y is influencing the life and death decisions of the cell after being exposed to stress. Anne's research is in collaboration with **Lance Barton**, associate professor of biology. She has been involved in research with him since February 2009.

A biology major with interest in a career in medicine, Anne plans to apply to medical school after graduation and work during the 2010-2011 academic year as an EMT.

Anne and **Kristin Hanna '11** accompanied Barton to the American Society for Cell Biology annual meeting in San Diego in December. The meeting of several thousand cell biologists includes a small group of undergraduate presentations. Both Anne and Kristin presented work during the undergraduate research session and the apoptosis scientific session. Their presentations were on PA28y research done with Barton, **Raehannah Jamshidi '09**, **Angela Collins '06**, and **Nida Iqbal '09**.

Kristin, a biology major with interest in a career in research, joined Barton's lab during the summer 2009 research program.

Three Austin College students presented Mellon research findings at the International Studies Association - South annual meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, last fall. On panels with professors and graduate students, each provided a 20-minute explanation of her research and then fielded questions. Political science faculty **Don Rodgers** and **Philip Barker** accompanied the students.

The students and their presentations were **Rebecca Halsey '10** - "A Patriotic Call to Duty or International Coalition Building: The Affiliation Motive and Integrative Complexity of George Bush after 9/11;" **Claire Balani '10** - "Human Rights and Transnational Advocacy Networks in China;" and **Jessica Bufford '10** - "The Europeanization of European Council Presidents."

Student Research Continues in Social Sciences

Cherie Blaylock Brown '10 loves to explore other cultures. After graduation, she will do exactly that in her role as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar. She has been awarded a \$25,000 scholarship for study toward a master's degree in applied economics, with a focus in public policy, at the Universidad Católica del Uruguay in Montevideo. What she studies there is not nearly as important, she said, as her interaction with the people of that country.

The Ambassadorial Scholarship program is designed to further international understanding and promote friendly relations among people of different countries and regions. Scholars serve as goodwill ambassadors to the host country, sharing information about their home country with groups there. Returning home, they offer others a greater understanding of their host country.

Cherie already knows a bit about Latin America. Through a Rotary exchange program, she spent her junior year of high school living with host families in Argentina, gaining confidence in herself and a passion for learning about other societies. Since then, she participated in a Rotary exchange program in Finland in summer 2005 and was a member of a January 2009 economics class that traveled to Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay.

Cherie began 2010 with adventure—marrying her fiancé, Paul, on January 1. By the time Cherie heads to Uruguay, he will have completed his service as a cryptological linguist with the U.S. Marine Corps and will accompany her. Since the academic year will not begin until March, the newlyweds hope to head south a few months early to travel the continent. Cherie said she particularly would love to swim in the Amazon with the piranhas during the rainy season and see Machu Picchu.

Overall, however, Cherie is not interested in tourist attractions. She looks forward to becoming involved in her community—wherever that might be, knowing her neighbors, and taking the most from whatever experiences come her way.

An economics major with a minor in community service and policy, Cherie is a member of the Posey Leadership Institute and a Model United Nations participant. She and her husband eventually plan to do foreign service work and anticipate more time spent living abroad and exploring cultures around the globe.

Seeking World Peace



College Ranks High in Study Abroad Report

Austin College again was included among the nation's top-ranked colleges for study abroad participation rates in the Open Doors report released in November 2009 by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

Based on data from the 2007-2008 academic year, the report lists Austin College at the No. 2 spot in the nation among baccalaureate institutions. The College has been ranked nationally in the top five on that list six of the past seven years, including three first-place rankings.

On a percentage basis, such high participation rates also place Austin College in the top five study abroad institutions among all categories of public and private colleges and universities nationally, and as the highest-ranked college or university in Texas.

Over the last decade, an average 70 percent of Austin College graduates have studied abroad at least once during their college years, exploring more than 50 countries on six continents. Among 2009 graduates of the College, that number topped 75 percent.

Elise Koestner '10, looks out over the Plaza de España in Sevilla, Spain, during a study abroad semester.

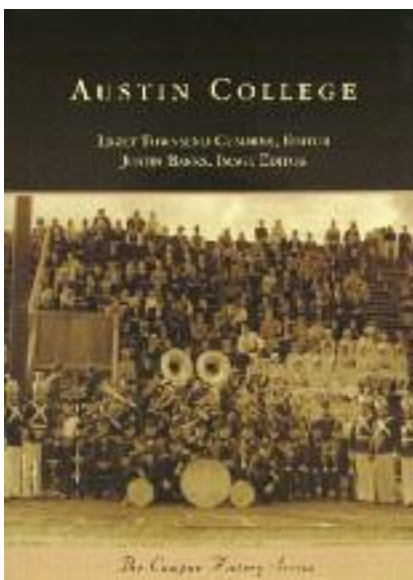


Collaborative History Project Shows Austin College Growth over 160 Years

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a new pictorial history of Austin College, including more than 200 photographs, provides a long read, detailing the College's rich 160-year history. *Austin College* is the culmination of a learning project led by history professor **Light T. Cummins**, with the assistance of College archivist **Justin Banks**, and includes the work of several students. "Most college history books are written by historians," Cummins said. "This is one of the few written by students and, as such, offers a student perspective about the history of the College."

Four student archive assistants, working with Banks, selected the images for the book from among thousands in the College collections, from the era of the daguerreotype to that of the digital image. Banks prepared the images for publication, and eight students in a history class taught by Cummins in spring 2009 wrote the text. Cummins edited the volume and provided continuity for the narrative that provides a full chronological history of the College. President **Marjorie Hass** wrote the forward for the book that was released by Arcadia Publishing Company in November 2009.

The student authors are **Elizabeth A. Elliott '09**, **David Loftice '10**, **Trang Ngo '09**, **Joshua Pollock '10**, **Paige Rutherford '09**, **Victoria Sheppard '10**, **William Weeks '09**, and **Jacqueline M. Welsh '09**. The archive assistants are **Gunjan Chitnis '12**, **Susan Le '09**, **Rebeka Medellin '12**, and **Ayesha Shafi '09**.



History Shared

John Mark Purcell '10 received a piece of history for Christmas 2009—the Austin College ring that belonged to his great-grandfather **Graham Boynton Purcell**, Class of 1913.

John Mark, though born in Texas, spent most of his life in Saint Petersburg, Russia, where his parents, Reformed Presbyterian missionaries, moved when he was a toddler. His grandmother, hoping he would attend college near her in Texas, suggested Austin College and told him his great-grandfather was a graduate. Though John Mark knew little about his ancestor's experiences, he discovered good things about Austin College, though his first trip to campus was the day he arrived for move-in and orientation.

He since has learned more about his great-grandfather. The elder Purcell played on the football team, and served as class historian, sergeant at arms, officer of the Athenaeum Society and the Athletic Council, and as a member of the Honor Council and the Athletic "A" Association. His entry in the 1913 Chromascope reports he was "a special favorite of the gentler sex."



While no such commentary is available on John Mark, his list of college experiences is equally diverse—though far more global in nature. A member of the Posey Leadership Institute, the international relations major received a Global Outreach Fellowship for service in Russia at an orphanage and at a summer camp for children with cerebral palsy. He spent a semester studying in Paris, France, and participated in several Model United Nations conferences. In summer 2009, he completed an internship at Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and attended the United Nations Youth Assembly Conference in New York. On campus, he played lacrosse for four seasons and is a founder and president of Zeta Chi Beta, a fraternity based

on service, leadership and accountability.

After graduation, John Mark expects to continue his international adventure and study, seeing more of the world than his great-grandfather likely ever dreamed. Wherever he travels, family heritage and his Austin College experiences will remain with him on his journeys in the form of a treasured 1913 college ring.



Giving Back

Gabriel Vasquez, Sarah Soret, Rachel Dodd, Asil Yassine, and Christopher "Matthew" LeBlanc pause for a photo during JanServe, sponsored by the Austin College Service Station. Cleaning a local park, they were among nearly 120 students who spent an afternoon in service at 20 locations. In November, 480 students volunteered for the annual Great Day of Service. Upcoming: Alternative Spring Break trip to Port Neches, Texas, for rebuilding still needed after Hurricane Ike. 🇺🇸



by Megan Kinkade

The music is loud and the energy is high: middle school and high school kids mimic the lively dances that Austin College students have choreographed to '90s pop songs like Smashmouth's "All Star." Several highly animated melodies later, everyone is panting for breath and fanning themselves after the jumping, shimmying, air-guitaring, and hand-jiving. Then the group settles cross-legged onto the ground to listen to a hymn and a sermon.

The student leaders guiding this event and others like it are ACTivators, a group of Austin College students with a wide variety of academic majors and religious backgrounds who share a common commitment to youth ministry.

Since February 1995, ACTivators have assisted with or planned more than 380 Presbyterian events, travelling more than 139,000 miles to interact with more than 37,000 participants of all ages in 20 presbyteries located in 13 states. The ACTivators provide music, energizers (those lively dances), small group leadership, and Bible study, and serve as examples of fun, active college students who have a faith in God.

The first group of students, which led several events before it even had an official name, was a natural outgrowth of chapel participation, according to **Michael Harper** '94. Chaplain **John Williams** '84 "did a great job capitalizing on the energy we had to get started in youth ministry," Michael said.

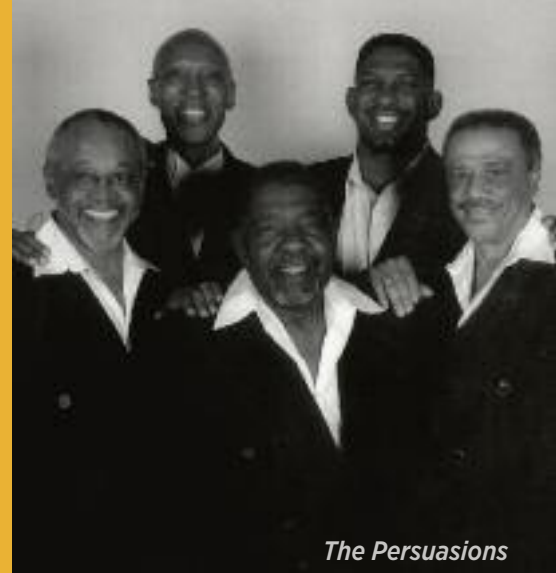
Those first members—**Amy Allen Parker** '95, **Noel Castin** '95, **Janet Chester** '95, **Brandon Wert** '96, and Michael—started with an event for Santa Fe Presbytery in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They were making it up as they went along—an event with only a theme, some Bible study, and a few energizers—and shocked themselves with a huge success.

That experience paved the way for future participants—and many more successful events. "The five of us who started out never dreamed of what it would become," Amy said. "I'm so proud of Austin College and I'm proud that we know the ACTivators have made a name for ourselves in terms of a presence in the community and something people can associate with the College in a real, positive way. But we never dreamed that was what we were doing; we just got in the car and headed for Santa Fe Presbytery."

In just a few years, the ACTivator program became a hallmark of the College. **Robert Quiring** '06 came to Austin College and joined the ACTivators because of his positive experiences as a high school participant in ACTivator-led events. The same was true for **Keatan King** '09, whose church youth director, **Christi Mobley** '01, had been an ACTivator and encouraged her to take part, too.

ACTivator Katie Peterson, standing fourth from left, poses with her small group at Camp Gilmont's "chapel on the hill" following a worship service in April 2009 at Kidquake, a annual retreat for elementary school students.

15 Years of Passing On the Love



The Persuasions

“The ability or the opportunity to continue with leadership roles in youth ministry was a big part of my college decision,” said Robert, who attends Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. “Austin College and the ACTivators were the next step in the progression to seminary.”

Keatan, now attending Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, found her vocation through the ACTivators. “There is no way I’d be in seminary without the ACTivators,” she said. “I think the ACTivators did more for me than almost any other influence in terms of discerning the call to seminary.”

Whether planned or through happy accident, many ACTivators have joined a ministry after graduation. Of the 418 ACTivators, 24 serve as full-time clergy or educators in the Presbyterian Church (USA), 16 are in seminary, and 14 alumni have served as PCUSA Young Adult Volunteers.

Katie Peterson ’10 of Plano, Texas, plans to be an elementary school teacher, but her experiences as an ACTivator help her personal faith, too. “Being in college, as we all know, can be stressful and incredibly busy, with not a lot of extra time to do things like explore my personal faith or really work on my relationship with God,” she said. “Doing something with ACTivators, though, is like jumping into a refreshingly cold pool in the middle of the summer—it reminds me what is truly important and meaningful in my life.”

While providing spiritual lessons, the ACTivators program provides students direct experience in event planning, organization, and leadership.

Working with children and youth, Keatan realized she was as much a recipient of ministry as a provider. “When I’m doing ministry with children and youth, they have as much or more to teach me about God as I do to them,” she said. “They have a lot to contribute to the congregation.”

Amy now works as director of children’s ministries at First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth, Texas, and Michael works on youth curriculum at the national level of the Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Both said the ACTivators have an enormously positive effect not only upon the Austin College students and the young participants but also upon the church.

“Students get so much out of it, but the presbytery, or anywhere in the country, is getting so much out of it, too,” Amy said. “We really benefit so much, as educators, from ACTivators being part of the Presbyterian programs.”

Michael agreed: “In a lot of places, I can say I’m one of the original ACTivators, and that is a big deal.” 🙌

ACTivators Anniversary Celebration April 1, 2010

*We’ve got to break through the fear
We’ve got to bust through the hate
Reach out our arms—Pass on the love.*

—George Cameron Grant, “Pass on the Love”

The ACTivators will celebrate 15 years of ministry with a free concert performed by The Persuasions at 7:30 p.m. on April 1 in Ida Green Theatre of Ida Green Communication Center. Chaplain **John Williams**, who has overseen the ACTivators for 15 years, said the anniversary event is a celebration of the students, the church, and what has been accomplished.

Playwright George Cameron Grant, who wrote the words and music to “Pass on the Love,” also will visit campus on April 1 and speak with students.

Those familiar with Williams’ *AColyte* know he frequently uses song lyrics to illustrate his thoughts in the monthly newsletter. In January 2009, he quoted from Grant’s “Pass on the Love” and mentioned that The Persuasions, who perform the song, have been singing a cappella music for more than 45 years.

Word passed along until John received an email from Grant ... and the rest, as they say, is history.

The concert is open to all students, as well as alumni and friends of the College.

Leading

Every year, millions of Americans visit the emergency room. Television offers fictional scenarios of emergency rooms on programs like *ER* or *Grey's Anatomy*, as well as real-life documentaries of the drama in the non-stop world of emergency medicine. But what, exactly, does it take to be an emergency room doctor? This is the question **Andrew French '01** has pondered as an emergency room resident.

As an Austin College student, French worked as a scribe at the Plano Presbyterian and Dallas Presbyterian hospitals' emergency medicine departments, in internships established by two Austin College alumni who had become ER physicians.

He shadowed the doctors, followed up on labs, placed orders for tests, and wrote discharge instructions. It was an intense summer placement of 12-hour shifts, including one full day each weekend. "This opportunity allowed me to discover the world of emergency medicine, and I fell in love with it," he said. "This became my passion, my purpose ... and it drove me to excel in my studies. Without this experience, I don't know if I would have pursued medicine."

In fact, French had been drawn to Austin College not for pre-medical preparation but by the Posey Leadership Institute. As an emergency room resident, he now draws upon that foundation in leadership training, communication, and service.

French is participating in the prestigious Denver Health Residency Program in Emergency Medicine, which prides itself on "training leaders." Yet, French questions this aspect of the program—while he and the other doctors are being trained to be strong clinicians adept at emergency medicine, he has found little leadership training.

French shared some of his background and Austin College experiences with his mentor, residency director Steven Wolph, and—together with another resident (Matt Mendenhall, son of Austin College alumna **Laura Shelton Mendenhall '69**)—began to consider creating a program specifically focused on leadership skills and development. Researching existing programs, they discovered that, while leadership development is an emerging trend in medicine, the primary focus is on established doctors who have demonstrated leadership capability.

French and his colleagues believe the focus should be on young doctors just embarking on their specialties. They spent the first year and a half brainstorming, identifying opportunities for leadership development, preparing lectures on skill topics, collecting a small library of books, and developing a program they could implement in their own residency program. As their ideas took shape, they got excited—what if they could share their program with others?

by Ingrid Healy

the Way

Armed with a vision and an outline of a plan, they developed a grant proposal for a project to create a leadership program that could be replicated, distributed, and implemented in any emergency medical residency program across the country. They applied to the American College of Emergency Physicians and were awarded the largest chapter grant possible.

Now in the final stages of development, the program consists of three key areas: core leadership attribute seminars and small groups, a reading list, and a speakers bureau.

French expects a finished product by April, at which point the program will be implemented at the Denver Health Residency Program in Emergency Medicine.

“We realize that we may not see outcomes until years down the road, but in the long-term ...,” French paused reflectively.

“Did my leadership training and experiences at Austin College lead me to emergency medicine? Or did emergency medicine cause me to draw upon that leadership training and experience? Who is to say? All I know is that the two must go hand-in-hand to best serve our patients and our profession.”

French explained, “As ER doctors we have to be consummately capable, always at the ready. There often are multiple unknown variables to assess and we must be able to communicate effectively with people from many different backgrounds. At the same time, we may be consulting with other physicians and technicians whom we have to manage and lead, because ultimately we are the primary physicians. We have to be able to balance all of this in the face of constantly different challenges. That takes all of the skills I learned at Austin College, and more—and makes emergency medicine residents prime candidates for leadership development.”

French’s vision for leadership training doesn’t end there. He believes this type of program could be applied to other residency training programs and medical schools.

In the meantime, he reminds himself of the core tenets of leadership he learned at Austin College: leadership development is a dynamic process of self-reflection, continual personal and professional growth, and maximized potential. He learned to assess and build on his strengths, to identify and address weaknesses, and to honestly review and evaluate his performance. Most importantly, he learned to lead by example—and never to stop learning.

Words to live by. 🧡



The Foundation is Solid, Now a Building is Needed

What if a building could capture the liberal arts mindset? Design of such a building would accommodate the multi-faceted and dynamic students who learn within its walls. This building would facilitate learning across disciplines and allow students to explore connections, interactions, and means of inquiry and expression that surpass a single field of study.

The IDEA Center, Austin College's planned science center, has been designed to support the basic mission of the liberal arts. The center's structure and equipment will facilitate specialized study in natural and physical sciences, mathematics, and computer science, and support interdisciplinary study to the benefit of students pursuing virtually any major offered at the College.



Liberal Arts in the 21st Century

Scientific knowledge always has been vital to human progress, and 21st century issues of science and technology require that these fields be integrated fully within all disciplines. In today's industry landscape, 82 percent of employers say colleges should put more emphasis on science developments as a learning outcome, according to an Association of American Colleges and Universities 2008 survey. In a similar survey, 76 percent of employers said they would recommend students pursue a liberal arts education.

"Our highest priority is to offer a lasting liberal arts education, not just technical career preparation that students might find out-of-date by the time they enter the workforce," said President **Marjorie Hass**. "A liberal arts education fosters and develops an inquisitive mind, a thirst and excitement for discovery, and a fearless, entrepreneurial spirit. Our goal is to make that type of education accessible to all of our students in order to equip them to be successful throughout their lives."

Why Entrepreneurship?

David Griffith, associate professor of business administration, notes that the word entrepreneurship is derived from the French word *entreprendre*, which translates "to go forth, to undertake." "The concept implies a sense of adventure that transcends capitalism," said Griffith. The spirit and attitude of an entrepreneur thrive in a liberal arts culture.

"Not all students will end up being entrepreneurs, but I'd like to think that everyone who steps into The IDEA Center will be explorers of some sort," said **Kelly Reed**, associate professor of biology. "Some may search the stars through the telescope; some may 'travel around the world' via the video displays; some may investigate scientific questions in a research lab; and some may study the impact of the building on the environment."

The modern economic and career environment requires an adventuresome spirit to survive. "Previous generations of Austin College graduates often were able to find relatively easy lifetime employment in large organizations," Griffith said. "Fewer and fewer such jobs exist today. Success in the current economy will require more flexibility and individual initiative than in the past."

What's in a Name?

An inquisitive mind, an appreciation for the discovery process, and a risk-taking, entrepreneurial attitude are characteristics commonly found and encouraged in the liberal arts environment and may well be what employers need for future success. IDEA signifies four principles (inquiry, discovery, entrepreneurship, and access) at the core of not only the building but also the educational experience found at Austin College.

Inquiry: Deeply committed to the enhancement of intellectual curiosity, Austin College long has attracted students eager for a hands-on, inquiry-based liberal arts education. The IDEA Center's modern design and expansion of available classroom space will facilitate this type of educational experience for students in humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Modern laboratory spaces will provide the foundation for inquiry-based learning.

Discovery: The process of discovery is central to the liberal arts. Student-faculty collaborative research (by science and non-science majors) at Austin College has seen tremendous growth and creates opportunities of discovery that many students don't experience until graduate school. From 2002 to 2007, almost 75 percent of students in the sciences were involved in some form of student-faculty research—compared to 25 percent from 1997 to 2001.

Entrepreneurship: Economic growth is fueled by scientific innovation. The IDEA Center will offer opportunities for faculty and students in business, pre-law, science, and other disciplines to work in partnership. Such experiences will be critical for interdisciplinary collaboration required at the professional level.

Access: Austin College is uniquely equipped to provide interdisciplinary scientific education to students from a variety of economic and ethnic backgrounds. More than half of Austin College graduates in scientific fields are women and more than 30 percent are minorities.

Austin College has been the choice for undergraduate education for students of a broad range of financial means. Strong language programs, high study abroad participation, the student-faculty mentor program, emphasis on collaboration, and a dedication to increasing scholarship support make an Austin College education accessible and appealing to a broad student demographic.

More than Rhetoric

Without the construction of The IDEA Center, the vision of Austin College faculty to prepare students for a world more dependent on science and technology will become nothing more than rhetoric.

The hands-on, experiential nature of 21st century science instruction and research necessitates modern facilities and equipment. To create a truly interdisciplinary exchange at Austin College between the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, expanded educational space is needed.

The IDEA Center is the final piece of Austin College's current strategy to integrate science into the liberal arts curriculum and maintain a competitive program, said **Mike Imhoff**, vice president for Academic Affairs. "This building has been designed to enhance the interdisciplinary relationships within the sciences," Imhoff said. "Now, it's clear that interdisciplinary connections are extending to other programs outside the sciences."

Construction of the 103,000-square-foot IDEA Center will increase classroom space on campus by 50 percent. "We have pretty much maximized our use of current classroom space," Imhoff said. "Most classrooms on campus were built 20 to 40 years ago and are technologically and aesthetically outdated."

Since the last construction project in the sciences (1965), enrollments in biology and chemistry and the number of science majors have doubled. A record-breaking freshman enrollment of 413 in fall 2009, while exciting for the College overall, certainly hasn't helped the space crunch. The IDEA Center not only will alleviate major needs in the College's physical infrastructure but also create an environment that will expand the exemplary work already being done in its science programs. The new LEED-certified facility, which will incorporate several "green" strategies within its design, will include 32 advanced laboratory-classrooms, 16 classrooms, 40 offices, and a 108-seat auditorium.

"Austin College has been energized about The IDEA Center for good and exciting reasons," said **Dennis Gonier '83**, Austin College Board of Trustee member. "This is the very heart of our mission as an enterprise of higher education. We know that our product involves creating the ability to learn, the instinct to challenge thought, and the passion to create ideas that help mankind move forward and rise above." 🌱

Physicians Cluster

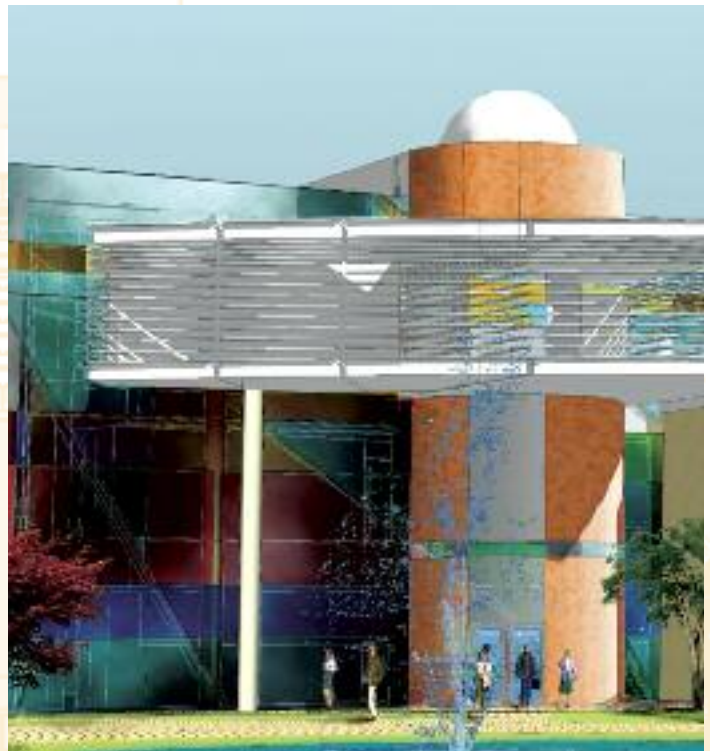
Austin College long has held a reputation of excellence in pre-medical preparation and education. Graduates applying to medical and health sciences professional schools have enjoyed acceptance rates exceeding 80 percent for more than a decade.

The Physicians Cluster in The IDEA Center will offer recognition of the success of Austin College physicians by providing them the opportunity to participate in funding efforts for the building and continue the tradition of excellence in pre-medical study.

This integrative biology, physiology, and immunology cluster includes four rooms: the Biology Classroom; the Developmental Biology, Neurology, Histology Laboratory; the Cell Biology/Anatomy and Physiology Preparatory Classroom; and the Cell Biology/Anatomy and Physiology Laboratory.

"This will create a strong symbol that undergirds the tradition that Austin College is the place to pursue a pre-medical program," said **Oscar Page**, president emeritus and interim vice president of Institutional Advancement. "As they walk through the building, students, alumni, and visitors will see the names of many outstanding and respected Austin College physicians."

Alumni interested in Physicians Cluster funding may contact Institutional Advancement staff at 903.813.2419.



compassionate medicine



It began accidentally.

As an Austin College freshman, **Marie Pfarr '10** sought out a medical clinic in which to volunteer and strengthen her preparation for medical school. But when she arrived at the address where she had spoken to staff, she found herself at Brentwood Nursing Home.

She'd made a commitment to volunteer for a few hours, so stayed despite her anxieties and discomfort. "It was a blessing in disguise," the now-senior student said.

When Marie saw the positive responses of the residents, who encouraged her to return, she didn't have the heart to say no. Soon, she was a regular at the facility, and that accidental visit progressed into four years of involvement and friends. "As much as I want to say that I've changed their lives, I think the residents have changed my life more just by being there and telling me their wonderful stories," she said.

Marie's parents, both cellular biology researchers, contributed to her interest in science, and she arrived at Austin College planning to major in biochemistry and pursue a career as an emergency room or family practice doctor.

She feels pulled toward those options because of the variety—a glimpse of which she has seen through internships at various hospitals. Marie has observed surgeries, witnessed the births of several babies, and came to understand the impact a caring soul can have in a hospital.

She remembers one incident in particular when a family came into the emergency room where she was working in a hospital in El Paso. Something was wrong with a young child, and Marie was dismayed that many hospital staff seemed apathetic to the family's worries. She took it upon herself to be supportive of the family, and to make sure they knew everyone was doing what they could to help the child.

"I expect many tears," she said of her future, "but it just builds character."

The roots of that empathy grew from that accidental stop at the nursing home. "I've developed great relationships with those residents, relationships similar to those that I hope to develop with my patients. I have learned the value of listening," Marie said.

Working with the elderly has helped her understand the balance between emotion and professionalism that she'll need in a medical career. "End-of-life situations always will be difficult. A doctor will certainly be affected. However, while a doctor shows compassion and sympathy, the physician also must maintain an objective professionalism," Marie said.

Marie has applied to eight Texas medical schools—and received early acceptance to four—including Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock, which is one of her top choices. The remaining schools may offer admission this spring so, though her medical school destination is not yet confirmed, she looks forward to beginning the next stage of her education and career preparation.

In the meantime, Marie stays busy at Austin College where she is captain of the dance team, a member of the Posey Leadership Institute, and works as a peer tutor in the Academic Skills Center, among other activities.

"I'd never thought of being a tutor before, and it's been amazing," she said. "I take people under my wing and really make sure they get involved because I feel like I've gotten so much out of this school, and so many other people can."

Laura Marquez, director of the Academic Skills Center, is grateful Marie is one of the tutors. "She makes her life as an Austin College student seem very, very easy, which it's not, when you look at the amount of responsibilities she's taken on," she said. "She does so much—I honestly don't know how she does it—and she does more than enough here (at the skills center). She's always the first to volunteer."

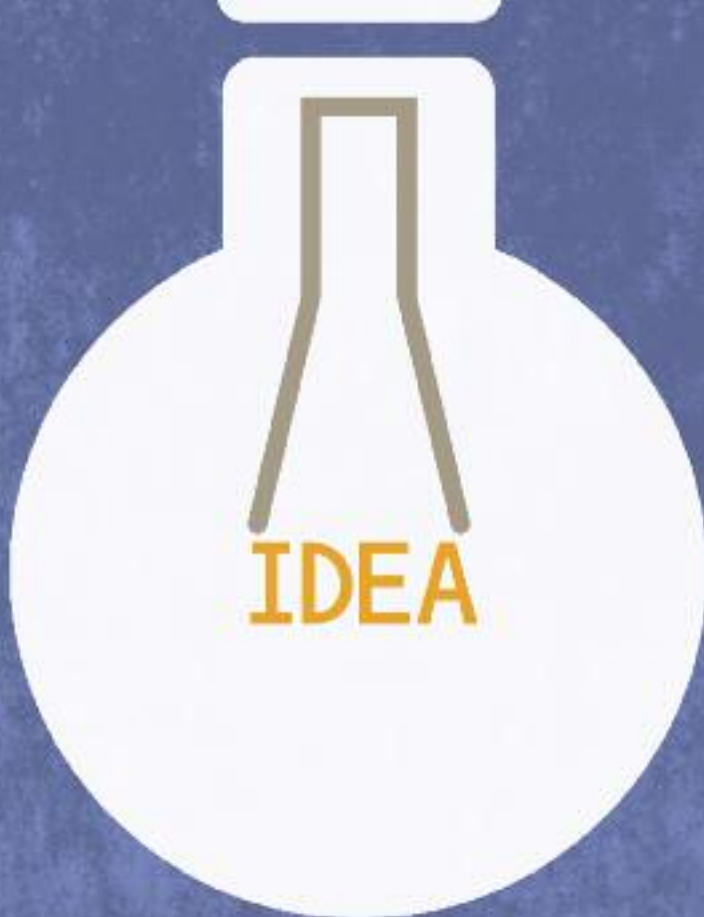
Her potential was seen early at Austin College, and she was named Freshman of the Year in 2007. Two years later, she received the Junior Kaplan Award for the outstanding health science student in Texas.

Jack Pierce, Austin College professor of biology and director of Health Sciences, nominated her for that award. "What is so impressive to me is Marie's ability to balance so many activities and her academic work, and do them all very well—and always with a smile," he said. "I'm confident that Marie will excel in medical school and make an excellent contribution to her community as a caring and concerned physician."

Marie credits the Austin College experience with showing her the importance of service. In addition to time and projects at Brentwood, this past holiday season she organized a donation program benefiting two additional nursing homes. She also takes part in various projects through the Austin College Service Station and volunteers as a dog walker at a local animal shelter.

"I've so enjoyed my time at Austin College," Marie said. "It really has shaped who I am and my character. I definitely chose the right school. I've made great friends here and become involved in a lot, which really has changed my focus to community service. I think Austin College has prepared me so well for what is to come next."

"When people on campus think of me, I think they say 'she is that girl who is always volunteering,'" Marie said with a laugh. "That perception means a lot to me. That compassion, I think, is extremely necessary for a doctor to have." 🌟



An Investment in Discovery

by Dara McCoy

Realization of The IDEA Center at Austin College will be “the walk behind the talk,” as Board of Trustees member **Dennis Gonier** ’83 puts it. The planned science center will extend the legacy of excellence in liberal education into the 21st century by making possible a truly outstanding education in the sciences. “In some cases, the ability to offer a modern education is tied directly to facilities,” said **Mike Imhoff**, vice president for Academic Affairs. “This is absolutely true with science.”

“As alumni, our credibility rests largely upon the continued vitality of the school that educated us, and in this technological era, that vitality depends on our having current facilities that can attract and support the work of excellent faculty and students,” said **Mary Ann Stell Harris** ’70, Austin College Board of Trustees member. “I always have been proud of Austin College’s standing as a respected institution and such a reputation requires maintenance and reinvestment.”

At Austin College, investment in science facilities is sorely needed. “Our faculty members have been amazing in providing learning and research opportunities for our students given the limits of current facilities,” said President **Marjorie Hass**. “Without construction of the IDEA Center, the College will struggle to keep up with peer institutions, risking loss of our premiere status in science education.”

RESEARCH AS A TEACHING TOOL

Austin College faculty and administrators remain dedicated to a liberal arts curriculum and a teach-first mindset that prepares students to be the ones creatively solving social problems, developing scientific insights, boldly starting new businesses, and making meaningful contributions to their local and global communities. While Austin College is not a research institution, its culture of innovation does create an environment for experiential learning that includes significant collaborative research between Austin College faculty and students. (See “*Gas Jello, Energy Paint, Nanogears: Science Fiction or Science at Austin College?*” on p. 19.)

In recent years, Austin College faculty members have received competitive grants from the Department of Energy, NASA, the National Science Foundation (NSF), private foundations and venture capitalists. In 2007, **Kelly Reed**, associate professor of biology, was one of 12 faculty members nationwide selected for the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Undergraduate Research Program in Microbial Genome Annotation. Reed involved students in her Spring Term 2008 microbiology class in sequencing all cultivatable bacteria and archaea to create a genomic reference work.

In 2008, Austin College became one of 28 educational programs in the nation to receive an Institute for Personal Robots in Education (IPRE) and Microsoft Research award to enhance computer science curriculum with robotics technology. In October 2009, **Stephanie Gould**, assistant professor of chemistry, was awarded a \$100,000 NSF grant for research on the development of nanogear systems for

nanomachines. For each of the next two summers, four to six Austin College students will be involved in Gould’s research.

“I believe that undergraduate research is one of the most important learning experiences students can have because it puts them into situations where no one knows what is going to happen or what the right answer is,” said **Karla McCain**, associate professor of chemistry, also conducting research in the field of nanotechnology. “I see doing research with undergraduate students not only as the means to pursue my own scholarly interests, but also as an important part of my teaching and mentoring of Austin College chemistry students.”

LIBERAL ARTS: DOES THAT INCLUDE SCIENCE?

In 1983, a task force of faculty from the sciences, humanities, and social sciences was formed to determine “if the Austin College curriculum provided an adequate opportunity for liberal arts students to understand the processes, the power, the methods, and perhaps the history of the sciences,” said **Peggy Redshaw**, professor of biology. By 1984, the entire faculty discussed a revision of the Heritage of Western Culture (HWC) sequence so that a science course (HWC 44: “Models of Scientific Thought”) could be included. “This brought science into the interdisciplinary core of the College,” Imhoff said. “This was a major step in that it created a graduation requirement that all students experience this interdisciplinary treatment of science.”

Interdisciplinary study continues to be a natural emphasis of the liberal arts curriculum, and The IDEA Center will become a physical extension of the science integration Austin College faculty considered in 1983. Today, the College offers 15 interdisciplinary majors and minors, two of which (Environmental Studies and Global Science, Technology, and Society) will be housed in the new center.

Austin College has strengthened its general education by requiring that every Austin College student take two science courses. To spark non-science majors’ interest in the sciences,

stimulating introductory-level laboratory courses in biology, environmental studies, chemistry, and physics were specially designed to ensure all Austin College graduates receive a scientific education that enables them to become engaged citizens in their community.

TIME KEEPS ON SLIPPIN'

Though Austin College faculty and students in the sciences have had several significant accomplishments (see "By the Numbers" below), they have had to overcome many obstacles to do so. Currently, all science instruction takes place in two adjoining buildings. The 17,000-square-foot Thompson Hall was built in 1914 at a cost of just over \$35,000 and was last renovated in 1965 when the 54,000-square-foot Moody Science Center was built.

Austin College faculty members have developed a curriculum for modern science instruction, but the campus lacks the physical structure to facilitate their vision. "Everyone in business knows that if you're not constantly moving, then you're behind," said **Brad Smucker**, associate professor of chemistry. "That's what we're doing in Moody Science. As much as we can move, we are."

The lack of physical space has become a problem. Moody Science Center does not have adequate classroom space, sufficiently safe laboratory facilities for growing student enrollments, or the necessary infrastructure to house modern instrumentation. Moody's outdated design hampers modern methods of instruction like group work or use of computers in lab settings. Faculty even sacrifice their own space—like using a faculty conference room for lectures, moving equipment in and out each day to accommodate course instruction needs.

"Our facilities are the weak link in an otherwise strong program," said Dr. Hass, explaining that several new areas of study have been added to the sciences curriculum, as have the additional faculty needed to provide new courses and expanded offerings. "Our graduates continue to be accepted into medical and graduate schools at high rates, collaborative research projects are well-represented at regional and national conferences, and our faculty members remain competitive for prestigious research grants and awards," Dr. Hass said. "Considering these successes and all that is being accomplished already, I am thrilled to imagine what students and faculty will achieve when The IDEA Center is realized."

By the Numbers

- ❖ From 2005 through 2009, 64 percent of chemistry graduates and 51 percent of biology graduates went on to pursue a Ph.D. or medical doctorate.
- ❖ Since 2006, Austin College student-faculty collaborative research projects (involving eight faculty and 18 students) in the sciences have resulted in seven scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- ❖ Since 2003, 24 Austin College math and science students have presented research findings on topics ranging from cell biology and organogels to geophysics and Snell Geometries at national and regional conferences.
- ❖ After completing a summer or semester-long research experience at Austin College, students indicating plans to pursue a Ph.D. in the sciences increased by almost 30 percent, compared to survey results before the experience.
- ❖ Acceptance rates to medical and health professional schools have exceeded 80 percent for more than a decade.
- ❖ More than one third of the College's Career Study Off-Campus assignments each academic year are medical-related internships.
- ❖ Since 2005, the annual Science Division Poster Symposium has had more than 150 student participants and has spurred a dramatic increase in off-campus presentations among Austin College students (40 since 2005, with additional student abstracts submitted in fall 2009 for presentation at meetings).

GAS JELLO, ENERGY PAINT, NANOGears, AND SUPERCONDUCTORS: Science Fiction or Science?

Austin College faculty members do exciting research and involve several students in their projects each year. Their work in material science, nanotechnology, neuroscience, and physics is the behind-the-scenes legwork that turns science fiction into science.

Project: **Organogels**

Principal Investigator:

Andrew Carr, *associate professor of chemistry*

Carr holds the patent on a thermal reversible organic gellator compound. That means Carr can create gasoline jello or turn organic liquids into a gel form that can be reheated back into liquid form. He also is working on the gelatinization of ionic liquids as conductors, which could eliminate the need for copper and other heavy metals in batteries, capacitors, and lightweight electronics.

Big Picture: Non-combustible, safe storage and transport of gasoline, crude oil, and other organic liquids; improved methods in cleanup and disposal of environmentally harmful liquids; "green" batteries

Project: **Nanosatellites**

Principal Investigator:

Brad Smucker, *associate professor of chemistry*

Smucker is working on the creation of nano-sized satellite dishes made of platinum and other materials that can harvest sunlight and convert it to electricity. Move over solar panels. Smucker's molecules will utilize the white pigment in paint as a semiconductor, which means there is potential for paint coated on the exterior of a building to harvest electric energy from the sun.

Big Picture: Energy paint

Project: **Nanogears**

Principal Investigator:

Stephanie Gould, *assistant professor of chemistry*

Gould's research on a supramolecular approach to material creation may overcome existing barriers in geared network creation in nanotechnology. Translation: Gould's gears someday may turn inside molecular-sized machines that engineers use to sense microscopic cracks in bridges or be utilized in safe and precise drug delivery within the human body.

Big Picture: Nanomachines

Project: **Disease Pathways**

Principal Investigator:

John Richardson, *assistant professor of chemistry*

The inability of proteins to fold into their correct three-dimensional structure leads to protein misfolding maladies including cystic fibrosis and Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases. Richardson's research is focused on identifying the quality control mechanism in cells that affects protein folding/ misfolding. Understanding this link could lead to the rational design of novel proteins with applications in therapeutics and pharmaceuticals, as well as industry.

Big Picture: New treatment for diseases

Project: **Cell Biology/Immunology**

Principal Investigator:

Lance Barton, *associate professor of biology*

Barton's research on a common cellular enzyme that controls every basic function of the cell allows students to study the processes of life and death at a cellular level. His research may result in a better understanding of the biochemistry of cell biology.

Big Picture: New ways of fighting cancer or treating autoimmune diseases on a molecular level

Project: **Superconductors**

Principal Investigator:

Andra Troncalli, *assistant professor of physics*

Superconductors are materials that have no resistance to the flow of electricity. High temperature superconductors can be cooled with liquid nitrogen, which makes these materials very desirable. However, these superconductors cannot carry much current. Troncalli's research focuses on ways to improve current flow in superconducting materials.

Big Picture: Improving efficiency of the electrical grid

Getting Acquainted ...

Jenny King '92, Austin College Alumni Board member who will assume board leadership in July, recently sat down with the College's new president, **Dr. Marjorie Hass**, to talk about her vision for the future and plans for Austin College on the horizon.

JK:

Let's begin with a question about Austin College's future. There is a lot of buzz about a new era and new times for our school with your presidency. Can you share your vision for the College?

MH:

We want to stay true to the mission of the institution and at the same time make the kinds of changes needed to prepare our students for the world they will face upon graduation. We want to maintain and support the things that our alumni hold as important about an Austin College education: commitment to the liberal arts, outstanding teaching, a spirit of community, and an education that speaks to the soul as well as the mind. But at the same time, it is very important that we keep moving the College forward. As the world changes, so must the ways we prepare our students.

JK:

What changes do you see coming at the College?

MH:

We need to be much more intentional about some of the things we have taken for granted. There was a time when we could be very confident that students who emerged from a strong liberal arts college could immediately find work or enter graduate schools that would open doors for their desired careers. Because the world of work is changing and we are in an extremely competitive environment, we need to be more intentional about helping students connect the dots and make a bridge from an undergraduate liberal arts education to a successful career.

JK:

I couldn't agree more. So many of our students study and travel abroad; they are aware of global issues and other cultures; and they can think critically. However, they may not know how to best navigate the daily "real world" of work—career building, networking, graduate school applications. They may not be able to articulate the value of their education.

MH:

All of the recent surveys show that when employers are asked what they want in new employees, those employers say over and over that they look for the very kinds of skills that Austin College hones: critical thinking, oral and written communication, and a global perspective. Our students graduate with the ability to perform at a high level, and many have had those extra experiences that are very appealing to employers, such as international study, internships, or independent research. However, we need to help them articulate the value of those skills and how they can add value to an organization.

JK:

Indeed. Austin College students have a strong work ethic; they understand how the world operates; and they want to do work that matters. Articulating all of this is another story, so it is exciting that you are focusing on this. It also is a great opportunity to engage alumni for assistance.

MH:

I really look forward to getting some thoughts from alumni about how we can do this effectively. One of my goals is to make sure we have the strongest alumni-student career link network in the country.

JK:

Can you tell us more about the vision you have for the College and maybe new projects, ideas, and initiatives underway or on your list to accomplish?

MH:

This is a very important moment for Austin College because the country is in the midst of difficult economic circumstances and that certainly is having an impact on how we do business at the College. We've seen a drop in our endowment, which means fewer dollars available for student scholarships. More of our families are having greater difficulty paying tuition, which means fewer dollars coming in to support our quality academic programs. We really are in a moment where we have to do a lot of outreach in order to stabilize our budget. It's important, though, that as we do that, we not lose sight of building for the future. It can be very easy in a climate like this to focus entirely on plugging holes to keep the boat afloat. But we need to do much more than that. We need to row ever harder and continue to plot an ambitious course. We are looking into a variety of initiatives that we think will expand opportunities for students. We hope to explore some additional master's



programs that could be modeled like our teacher program—five-year programs in which students could earn bachelor's and master's degrees. We also are looking very hard at expanding and improving our living arrangements for students to offer them more appealing options. Another important project on which we've been working very hard through the fall term is a new design for the Web site and ways to make our site more interactive. We plan to unveil the new site in March. There will be a virtual campus tour that should be pretty spectacular, and we hope the site will be much easier to navigate as well.

JK:

We on the Alumni Board are very excited about the Web site and see this as a terrific way to strengthen outreach to students, prospective students, and alumni. ... Switching gears a bit, we've read profiles on you but maybe we could spend a little time talking about what drew you to Austin College and how you came to make the move?

MH:

It's really fascinating for me to reflect on that, having been here for six months. I really do feel a strong sense of call and mission in my work here at the College. In terms of the process, when I first was contacted about the position, I had heard of Austin College and knew of its outstanding reputation, but my first thoughts were that it might not be the right match or the right fit. I had never lived in Texas;

Austin College had never had a woman president or a Jewish president. However, the people overseeing the search were very persistent and really encouraged me to meet with them. I took that chance and it was just love at first sight. I walked into the room at what was supposed to be a very formal interview and we immediately fell into the kind of conversation you have with old and dear friends. I could sense the passion for the institution. I could see the values of the College shining through the faces of the interview committee. It was immediately and immensely appealing to me.

JK:

Ah, yes, that wonderful Austin College community. It is very inclusive and makes you feel right at home. Are you willing to talk about the connection of the College with the Presbyterian Church and the new dimension you bring with your Jewish background?

MH:

My education was at public institutions. It had been my sense that public institutions would be welcoming places for me as a Jewish woman because they would be tolerant of religious diversity. That was true to an extent. I certainly found myself accepted in public institutions, but it wasn't until I began to work at church-related colleges that I discovered there is a much more satisfying way to live that goes far beyond being tolerated, and that is to be *embraced*



and Looking Forward

in a community that cares deeply about faith and about guiding one's life by principles that go beyond the secular. So my experience at Muhlenberg College and certainly my experience at Austin College, have been that I find myself much more in tune and in touch with the relationship between my working life and my more personal spiritual life than I ever did when I was working or studying in secular institutions. It is certainly a challenge, but a challenge I relish, to make sure that I continue to support the strong and deep connection between Austin College and the Presbyterian Church. It is absolutely part of my job description to build those bonds and to support that relationship, but it also is part of my passion and my calling because I see that relationship as absolutely essential for the College's educational mission. It has been a deep pleasure to learn more about Presbyterian traditions, to become involved with Presbyterian institutions, and to serve the College through those relationships.

JK:

One of the hallmarks of this institution is embracing all people, so I welcome the religious and gender diversity you are bringing to campus.

MH:

I have had many conversations about this with alumni from a variety of perspectives. Some people close to the College have been very excited. They see this as a new chapter in the College's ongoing commitment to religious diversity. Others have been more questioning, "What would this mean? How does this work? Does this mean a change for the College?" Some people have been a little anxious about whether or not I can live out my commitment to maintain that relationship. I hope that people who have that worry will be aides and guides to me as I seek to do that. I have been learning a lot and have really grown from the very frank, intense, and in-depth conversations I've had with alumni, current students, and faculty about how we navigate religious diversity in the context of a Presbyterian college.

JK:

Again, Austin College is very good at embracing diversity and using that to our advantage as we do new things in the world, so this is a great new element for the College.

MH:

Thank you, I really appreciate you taking that perspective. I would say that most people I have met have greeted me from that perspective as well. For those for whom a different perspective feels more immediately natural, I certainly welcome conversation even around some of these harder issues.

Jenny and Dr. Hass also discussed how alumni can be involved in the College's plans for the future and ways that alumni can further connect with the College. That portion of the conversation must be saved for a later issue. Watch for "the rest of the story." 🍷





THE

Victoria Cummins, professor of history, loves a good mystery.

Her personal preference is a well-written British mystery novel by Dorothy Sayers set between the World Wars. The deductive skills of Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey, however, aren't required to discover evidence of this interest in Cummins' professional life. The undiscovered and perhaps mysterious aspects of the past have driven her academic specialization and research focus for years.

Cummins developed a passion for Latin American history, her academic specialization, in a high school current events class during the 1960s, when U.S. and Latin American relations often were headline news. Cummins entered college assuming a major in political science would fit her interest in current events, switched to a business major at one point, but admits to always enrolling in history courses "for fun."

"By my junior year, I had as much history as I had business and more than political science," Cummins said. "So, I declared as a history major and decided to specialize in Latin America." After obtaining her bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland, Cummins earned her master's degree and Ph.D. from Tulane University, focusing her graduate research on Mexican colonial history. "Part of the charm of Mexican colonial history was that not much was known about it," said Cummins, noting that, in 1972, early Mexican history was under-researched by Mexican and non-Mexican scholars. "I found that an interesting challenge."

Victoria and her husband, **Light Cummins**, were teaching history at a junior college in Georgia when opportunity knocked for both of them, as positions opened up at Austin College in 1978. Cummins said the teaching experience gained at the junior college was good, but the opportunity to teach within her specialization at a liberal arts college was more appealing.

"We were attracted to the liberal arts college model, where not only do you teach a lot of different courses but also there is opportunity to expand the curriculum to meet your interests and to meet student interests as they change over time," she said.

Though 31 years have passed since Cummins joined the Austin College faculty, she still loves many of the same aspects of liberal arts colleges that first attracted her. "Austin College has been tremendously good about supporting research, and for

by Dara McCoy

PHOTO BY VICKIE S. KIRBY

MYSTERY OF HISTORY

historians, that generally means travel, especially if you're researching Spanish language resources," she said. Cummins has received support—for research, teaching, or course-related faculty development—to travel to Spain, Mexico, London, the Mayan territories of the Yucatan, Cuba (legally in 1998), New York, and New Orleans.

"Our faculty support from the Richardson and Cullen funds is the envy of every colleague I have at any other institution," Cummins said. "It's a tremendous help for liberal arts teachers because we do tend to teach very broadly. We really need the enrichment in a lot of ways."

Over the years, Cummins has taught a variety of Latin American history courses and conducted research on religion and society in colonial Mexico and Peru. In the 1980s, she and her husband developed a JanTerm course entitled "The Art of Historical Detection," which focused on the ways historians approach research and interpret information about the past. With subject matter such as the Watergate scandal, the sinking of the Titanic, and "Who Killed JFK?," the course proved to be suited to students who have shared Cummins' mystery-loving approach to history.

Today, Cummins is working on a 20th century research project involving the influence of Mexican muralism on Texas artwork commissioned through the 1930s Public Works of Art Project—a relief program that came out of the New Deal. A colonial Mexican historian researching artwork of the New Deal-era involves an interest in Mexican art Cummins developed during the "down-time" of research trips in Mexico City and, of course, the allure of a good mystery.

"The PWAP is not very well studied," Cummins said. She still has about a year's worth of research and travel left on her agenda—every good sleuth conducts a thorough investigation—but envisions eventually publishing a book (academic, not mystery) on her research.

She's leaving the mystery genre to Dorothy Sayers and her able colleagues. 🕵️



Victoria Cummins

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(3) Emory Glover, a broker associate with Keller Williams Houston Metropolitan Realty, closed a sale in October to the nephew of his first clients, with whom he worked in 1983. Emory's June 2009 vacation included visits with 17 friends in eight European countries via 44 trains.

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G. Ward Beaudry has been elected to membership in the Fellows of the Texas Bar Foundation in recognition of his contributions to the legal profession. Fellows of the foundation are selected for outstanding professional achievements and demonstrated commitment to the improvement of the justice system throughout Texas. An attorney with Winn Beaudry & Winn of Dallas, Beaudry works in the areas of estate planning, probate and trust law, elder law, trust and estate litigation, corporate litigation, family business and succession planning, and mediation. He has written many articles, been a frequent speaker, and served on many boards and committees within the law community. ■ **(13) David Hornbeck** has written *Choosing Excellence in Public Schools: Where There's a Will, There's a Way*. Teacher and administrator Katherine Connor was also involved in the writing of the book. David has spent 42 years as an educator, community organizer, and activist, serving as Maryland state superintendent of schools, Philadelphia superintendent of schools, and chair of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Carnegie Corporation's Commission on the Education of Early Adolescents, the Children's Defense Fund, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Chapter I Commission, and the Public Education Network. With support from the Gates and Hewlett foundations, David is involved in grassroots organizing efforts with faith communities in Ohio and California to build public will for quality education for all children. He and his wife, **Becky Maid Hornbeck**, live in Baltimore, Maryland. ■ **Nick Lund** has been elected to serve on the Arizona State Committee on Trails, which makes recommendations about trail usage, maintenance, and development to the Arizona State Parks Board. Nick is president of TRACKS, a group of over 300 volunteers who work with the U.S. Forest Service to plan, develop, and maintain more than 200 miles of trails for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests of northeast Arizona.

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Thomas H. Schmid has retired and has been named pastor emeritus of Falls Church Presbyterian Church in Virginia. He and his wife, Beth (**Elizabeth Wheatcroft** '67), will make their new home in Santa Barbara, California.

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Bobby Scott Mabry and Brenda Thaxton were married August 22, 2009, at Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church in The Woodlands, Texas. **Michael Anderson** '81 served as best man at the wedding. Scott is an assistant district attorney in Bay City, Texas. Brenda retired from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in September 2009.

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The Rev. **Brent Barry** is now pastor of NorthPark Presbyterian Church in Dallas. Since his ordination in 2000, Brent has ministered at several Dallas churches, having served as pastor at Glendale Presbyterian, director of adult ministries at First Presbyterian Church, and interim pastor at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. He also served on the staff at Northridge Presbyterian. He has led many seminars and study groups around Dallas and has headed several mission trips to Mexico. He and his wife, **Susan Cox** '91, an attorney, live in Dallas with their children Hannah, a sixth grade student at White Rock Elementary, and Ian, a fourth grade student at Preston Hollow Presbyterian School.

90

Austin Spencer was named a 2009 Five Star: Best in Client Satisfaction Wealth Manager in the Austin, San Antonio, and Central Texas area, as listed in the September 2009 *Texas Monthly*. He is a financial advisor and financial planning specialist with Smith Barney in Austin, Texas.

92

(5) A daughter, Margaret Frances, was born to **Jarrold Foerster** and his wife, Mimi, on July 23, 2009. ■ **Patricia Reed-Cabay** lives in Singapore with her husband, Frederic, and their children Audrey, 10, and Roman, 7. When President Barack Obama and his staff were in Singapore in November 2009 for the APEC summit, Patricia was invited to introduce Valerie Jarrett, Obama's senior adviser, at the U.S. Embassy for a gathering of 14 women active in the women's movement, who spent two hours with Jarrett discussing challenges and opportunities for women. Only two American women were invited to participate in what Patricia said was a tremendous opportunity. She also began a new job at Microsoft in September 2009, in Singapore, doing solution sales with global accounts. She previously had worked for Cisco Systems for nine years in Singapore and Brussels. She has lived in Singapore for three years. ■ **Kristie Wright** was named Attorney of the Year at the Texarkana Bar Association September 2009 meeting. The award recognizes an individual who represents the profession by exhibiting honesty, integrity, and professionalism while also contributing to the bar and community. Kristie practices with the law firm of Haltom & Doan.

96

Amy Wells has signed a two-year teaching contract with Université Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand, France, in the Auvergne region. As *le maître de langue*, she teaches American literature and English language to non-specialist students. She continues work with her research team on "Human Spaces and Cultural Interactions" in Limoges, France.

97

Melinda Massie operates her own business, Melinda Massie Events and Consulting, which was recently featured in an Oprah.com article about the best money-saving secrets for weddings. The company handles all types of social, corporate, and non-profit events. The company was recognized in November 2009 by StartupNation as a top-10 business in its 2009 Home-Based 100



Picture This

Brianna Burnett '02 spoke to art students on campus in fall 2009 at the artist reception for her campus photographic display, "a keepsake, a relic."

Bri operates Brianna M. Burnett Photography and Design and is an adjunct member of the faculty at Northwest Vista in San Antonio, teaching art appreciation, drawing, photography, and design. She also teaches at The Southwest School of Arts and Crafts. Before earning a Master of Fine Arts degree from Texas Tech University in 2008, she spent two years as an arts specialist with West Memorial Elementary School in Katy, Texas, and was a community art educator at Lubbock Garden and Arts Center.

Bri had two solo exhibits in San Antonio in 2009, as well as previous exhibits at Texas Tech University and the Center for Art and Peace in Suchitoto, El Salvador. She has been an invited artist at exhibits in Huntsville, Abilene, Laredo, and Lubbock, Texas, in addition to participating in many group exhibits, including the "Traveling Show from (No)where" in Dallas.

Scott Grischow '98 will take on one of the biggest challenges of his life this spring.

Scott and his dad, Don, will climb Mount Everest, the sixth mountain in their quest to top the Seven Summits—the highest mountains on each of the world's continents. Their trip will begin March 28, and they will begin climbing April 3, hoping to reach the summit in mid-May. They will return to the United States in June.

They won't just climb—they'll share their experience with status updates to their Web site so that those closer to the ground can track their progress as they ascend the highest peak in Asia—and the world.

Scott and Don already have scaled Cerro Aconcagua (South America, 2004); Mount Elbrus (Europe, 2005); Mount Kilimanjaro (Africa, 2003); Mount Kosciuszko (Australia, 2007); and Mount McKinley /Denali (North America, 2007). Vinson Massif in Antarctica is number seven on the list, scheduled for a 2011 climb to finish the challenge.

Only approximately 250 individuals in the world have reached the summits of the seven continents. Keep track of Scott's climb:

www.sevenin11.com

Don and Scott Grischow celebrate atop Mount Elbrus.



On Top of the World

competition in the category of “most glamorous.” Melinda’s expertise also has been featured on The Learning Channel Web site and Pre-OwnedWeddingDresses.com.

99

(9) A son, Grant Thomas, was born June 22, 2009, to **Joe and Kim Freeman Newton** ’03. The family lives in Coppell, Texas.

00

(4) A son, Max Kooper, was born on September 10, 2009, to **Reid and Summer Alexander Merritt**. Summer is a family medicine physician in private practice in Midland, Texas. Reid is a professional photographer and enrolled in the MBA program at the University of Texas – Permian Basin.

01

(12) **Alissa Dyson** and Lyle Nevin were married on October 31, 2009, in Austin, Texas. Alissa is an AP chemistry teacher and chair of the science department at Dripping Springs High School, just outside of Austin. ■ **Hope (Bess) Fulmer Wilson** graduated in May 2009 from the University of Connecticut, earning a doctorate in educational psychology with a specialization in gifted education. She is an assistant professor at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, where she lives with her husband, Jon, and children, Lily Elisabeth 7, and Keenan Michael, born in 2009. Hope recently co-authored the book *Letting Go of Perfect: Overcoming Perfectionism in Kids*, available from Prufock Press.

02

(8) A daughter, Harper Paige, was born to **Kristopher and Brooke Blankenship Hiltzman** ’03 on August 29, 2009, in Sherman, Texas.

04

(6) **Ashley Fiamengo** graduated in August 2009 from Washington University in St. Louis with a doctorate in inorganic chemistry. Her dissertation was entitled “Structurally diverse Cu-64-labeled RGD peptides for PET imaging of $\alpha v \beta 3$ expression.” She is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania in the NIH-sponsored PENN-PORT program, which combines a traditional mentored postdoctoral research experience at the University of Pennsylvania with a mentored teaching experience at a partnering minority-serving university. ■ (7) **Melissa Johnston** was promoted to senior campaign manager with The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s South Texas chapter. She now manages the school and youth programs for 44 South Texas counties. ■ (11) **Jordan Watson** has founded The Law Office of Jordan E. Watson (a.k.a. Not Your Parents’ Lawyer) in Fort Worth, Texas. She practices in the areas of family law and small estates. ■ (2) **Aaron White** was installed in November 2009 as associate minister of First Unitarian Church of Dallas, the fifth largest Unitarian Universalist church in the country. Aaron graduated in 2007 from Harvard Divinity School. In Boston, he served as a chaplain at Massachusetts General Hospital, worked as a research associate at the Pluralism Project, and served Arlington Street Church (UU) as a religious educator. In 2007 Aaron

Exploring the Broader Context of Science

Matthew Kosnik ’96 arrived at Austin College searching for a greater understanding of how nature works. In addition to the scientific knowledge gained in the classroom, the laboratory, and in the field, he developed a desire to conduct research that spanned traditionally defined disciplines—following the examples, he said, of faculty such as **George Diggs** and **Martin Fuller**. Kosnik also took to heart the need for scientists to place their work in a broader context and for science to inform the decisions faced by society.

After graduating from Austin College, Kosnik earned a Ph.D. in paleobiology from the University of Chicago. His dissertation focused on the interaction between evolutionary and ecological changes in marine communities. He has worked with a variety of collaborators at the Paleobiology Database investigating ecological changes that occur on long evolutionary timescales. Some of this research was published in the journal *Science* and was featured in the September 2009 issue of *Natural History Magazine*.

As a post-doctoral fellow at James Cook University in Townsville, Australia, and then at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., Kosnik began working to quantify the human impact on modern marine ecosystems. He recently was awarded an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, to continue his investigation of historical changes to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) ecosystem. His research uses ancient seashells to reconstruct the pre-colonial state of the GBR and provides a pre-human-impact baseline that can be used to assess the health of the living molluscan community.

His research aims to provide environmental managers and stakeholders with the first quantitative estimates of how western colonization has impacted this world heritage ecosystem. As part of this project he will attempt to determine if protected areas return to a pre-colonial state or if they represent another non-natural state, and what type of management scheme results in communities most similar to the pre-colonial state.

Matthew married Katherine Wilson in 2007, and they live in Washington, D.C., with their son, Sean, born in 2008. The family will move to Sydney in June.



COURTESY PHOTOS

received first place in Harvard's annual Billings Preaching Prize. He and his wife, **Kate Wiseheart**, moved to Dallas from Austin, where Aaron worked as a consulting minister for a UU church in San Marcos and as young adult minister for the Southwest Unitarian Universalist Conference.

05

(10) A son, Evan Christopher Albury Jones, was born on October 28, 2009, to Steffan and **Lydia Albury Jones**. The Jones family lives in The Colony, Texas. ■ **(13)** A daughter, Isabella Margarita, was born on July 2, 2009, to **Christina Infante**. Isabella joins her sisters Allyson, Lauren, and Kendall Caves.

06

(1) A son, Luis Noé Leopoldo, was born on March 8, 2009, to **Jesús** and **Delilah Rodriguez Navarrete** '05, who live in McKinney, Texas.

07

David W. Killam recently completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois. The eight-week program, included training in naval customs, first aid, water safety and survival, firefighting, and shipboard and aircraft safety. A boot camp capstone event is designed to galvanize the basic attributes of sacrifice, dedication, teamwork, and endurance through the practical application of basic Navy skills. ■ **Clelia Moreno Pena** was named Sherman ISD Teacher of the Year for 2009, her first year teaching. She teaches as an ESL teacher in an all Spanish-speaking classroom. All of her students passed the TAXS exam, the only ESL in the school district with such high scores.

'Roos in Richardson

Finding an Austin College alumnus or alumna at work in major corporations, non-profits, government agencies, or civic organizations in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex is common. Visit the City of Richardson offices and the chances of finding a 'Roo increase. The city staff includes **Dan Johnson** '77, deputy city manager of Richardson since 1997, and **David Morgan** '96, who joined the staff in 1998 and today is assistant city manager. **E.A. Hoppe** '04 joined the staff following graduation and now holds the position of assistant to the city manager.

All three men visited campus this fall as presenters for the Public Administration Symposium, which included panel discussions on "Financing the Growth of Texas," "Searching for Quality of Life in North Texas Cities," and "Meeting Energy Needs as Texas Grows." **Justin Epker** '95, consultant and grant expert, participated in a panel on public administration as a career.



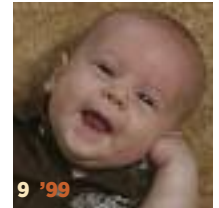
David Morgan, E.A. Hoppe, and Dan Johnson represent Austin College well in Richardson.

Words of Advice



Business alumni, from left, offering insider career advice to Austin College business students are Joe Fox, Greg Gitcho, Wes Moffett, Julia Kilgore, and Gillian Grissom.

Several Austin College business alumni attended the Williams Executive-in-Residence Lecture last fall and offered career advice and direction for students. **Wes Moffett** '82, president of Avelo Mortgage, served as moderator for the panel that included **Joe Fox** '00, portfolio manager for KMS Ventures; **Greg Gitcho** '99, vice president of acquisitions for Cypress Real Estate Advisors; **Julia Kilgore** '06, business analyst for Litton Loan Servicing; and **Gillian Grissom** '07, grants manager for Laying the Foundation, Inc. 🏠



IN MEMORIAM

'32	George Edward Farriss	November 10, 2009
'41	Margaret Fern Maul Jackson	December 10, 2009
'41	Maxine Rambin Keller	December 27, 2009
'52	Mariam Joyce Moussa Head	December 12, 2009
'52	Jim Madison O'Leary	January 8, 2010
'55	Charles Franklin Bons	December 2, 2009
'58	Patricia Stone	December 13, 2009
'65	Henry Bailey, Jr.	November 24, 2009
'71	Brian Hill Kelly	November 1, 2009
'71	Clinton Rabb	January 17, 2010
'75	Hal Jackson	December 29, 2009
'84	Kieron Patrick Finnegan	January 14, 2010

Friends We Will Miss

Juanita Irvine Cowan, a member of the Austin College Spanish faculty from 1962 to 1972, died December 12, 2009, in Fort Worth, Texas. She was 102 years old.

Senior Trustee Jean Poe Dies

The College community mourns the loss of senior trustee **Olive Jean Poe**, who died on Saturday, January 9, in Lake Charles, Louisiana, following a brief illness.

Mrs. Poe was an active civic and church leader, serving as a ruling elder of First Presbyterian Church in Lake Charles, president of Women of the Church, and moderator of the Presbytery of South Louisiana. She also was active in the Synod of the Sun and was a member of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the State Board of Church Women United.

She also was a lifetime honorary board member of the Speech and Hearing Center of Southwest Louisiana, and a member Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, the Junior League of Lake Charles, and the U.S. Power Squadron.

Mrs. Poe joined the Austin College Board of Trustees in 1982 and was a regular supporter of Austin College scholarships.



Haiti Earthquake Claims Life of Alumnus

The Austin College community is saddened by the death on January 17 of the Reverend **Clinton Rabb** '71, a leader in the United Methodist Church's mission volunteer program. In Haiti for meetings about improving healthcare there, he had entered the Montana Hotel in Port-au-Prince shortly before the earthquake hit on January 12. He was trapped for 55 hours in the rubble of the hotel before he was rescued and flown to a Florida hospital. He later died of his injuries.

Rabb worked as a pastor and chaplain in Texas for almost 20 years before joining the mission volunteer program. His work in missions took him around the world, including Cambodia, Russia, and Africa. He was head of the office of Mission Volunteers of the General Board of Global Ministries. In addition to his Austin College degree, Rabb earned a Master of Divinity degree at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a Master of Arts degree in counseling at Trinity University.

A portion of Austin College fundraising efforts for Haiti relief will memorialize Rabb. Fifty percent of donations raised on campus will be sent to the United Methodist Committee on Relief in his honor.



One Woman's Thoughts— On Women

Forget China, India, and the internet: economic growth is driven by women."

— *The Economist* (April 12, 2006)

I was not born a feminist, but I became one as soon as I heard the word! To me, being a feminist simply means insisting that women have a place at every table where important decisions that affect their lives are made. As someone once said, "If you don't have a place at the table, chances are you are on the menu!" It is true.

I have been privileged to live through the greatest change in women's roles in recorded history. Gail Collins' new book, *When Everything Changed*, describes what happened to women in the 1960s and 1970s and why it happened. The short version is that three things changed women's roles forever:

- ❖ the birth control pill, which enabled women to control and time pregnancies,
- ❖ the civil rights movement, which raised the nation's consciousness about fairness and passed laws that prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, gender or ethnicity, and
- ❖ an economy that developed then (and continues) that usually requires two incomes to support a middle class household (note that poor women always have had to work).

The one thing that did NOT change then, and still has not changed, is our abysmal system of caregiving, for both children and the elderly. We still pay people more to watch our cars (parking lot attendants) than we do to care for our children. Finding quality, affordable childcare remains the biggest impediment to women's ability to work and to support their families. As a result, way too many of our children enter school unprepared; as a result, even our best and brightest young women often self-select into careers that may not develop their full potential, but will give them the flexibility to raise children.

A recent study of high school valedictorians found that, while the boys were attracted to careers in engineering, technology, medicine, and business, the girls often mentioned teaching and other helping professions that typically pay much less. While we desperately need people in those professions, it is a fact that our public school systems and nonprofits (while very important) have been run primarily through the lower-paid work of primarily women. Can this nation afford this continued "occupational segregation"?

We must have macro-change at the public policy level. The United Nations tells us that worldwide, for every year beyond the fourth grade that girls attend school, wages rise 20 percent, child deaths drop 10 percent, and family size drops 20 percent.

Women are the key to economic development and security worldwide, as well as at home. If a woman can read, her children will learn to read; if she has healthcare, her children will be healthier; if she can support her children, they will thrive. Ninety-eight percent of micro-loans go to women because they use them to start successful businesses that support their families. But those same women will eventually need access to macro-loans and economies that encourage their progress.

In Texas, there are 1.3 million woman-headed households and 84 percent of them are in the bottom three income brackets, where, because of regressive tax policies, state and local taxes can take from six to 12 percent of their income. In the highest bracket of Texas households (incomes of \$117,900 or more), taxes are 4.9 percent of income. Texas ranked 50th in state government spending per capita in 2008, and 49th in state taxes collected per capita.

Low spending means that frequently prevention is not funded at all, leaving taxpayers paying the higher costs of intervention or treatment. Texas citizens send far more tax dollars to Washington, D.C., than we ever get back, mainly because the state spends so little for such things as children's health insurance, Medicaid, aid to domestic violence victims, and children in foster care—and therefore does not meet the requirements for many federal matching programs.

If we are to address the growing amount of poverty in our state, the best place to start is providing more funding for programs that strengthen families, women, and children, and by electing leaders who understand this imperative. 🍌

Rebecca Russell Sykes '67 is executive director of Dallas Women's Foundation.

Opinions shared in this column are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of Austin College, its administrators, or its Board of Trustees.

Alumni: Do you have an area of expertise for which you would like to share relevant information for today's world? Send ideas for a 500-word article to editor@austincollege.edu for consideration.

“Thanks to the support of the NOW Scholarship Fund, I have been able to lead, learn, and form my own lasting values.”

Austin College scholarships

FRANK McSTAY '12

Douglass Distributing Company Sponsored Leadership Scholarship

Frank McStay is committed to taking advantage of the diverse experiences available at Austin College. In his freshman year, he traveled to Berlin to study language and composition during JanTerm and was an Austin College delegate at the Model United Nations conference in New York City. (Frank recently was named a Justice in the Model UN International Court of Justice.) He interned at the Department of Defense Office of Counsel and created a database for tracking documentation that is utilized nationwide.

Frank is a resident assistant (RA) in Dean Hall and enjoys the chance to share his experiences and provide leadership to current freshmen. His activities in the Posey Leadership Institute and the Pre-Law Society have given him the opportunity to develop valuable relationships with alumni and friends of the College. Frank also volunteers with the local Mental Health Mental Retardation Center and the Sherman Crisis Center.

“I want to serve the people of America as a public servant,” he said. “I want to be the type of leader that casts a light where there is darkness and to show the good I hope to see in others.” Thanks to the support of his NOW Scholarship, Frank’s preparation for a career in public service is well on its way.



now

launch the journey

At Austin College, our students experience learning opportunities that challenge them to see and serve the world. The **Austin College NOW Scholarship Fund** provides critical support to financially assist deserving students, and gifts to this fund in any amount provide scholarships for a current student for up to four years of enrollment. Our commitment to scholarship availability is sustained by the generosity of alumni and friends whose gifts help give access to the Austin College voyage of discovery for all students—regardless of their financial status. Your gift matters! Make your donation to the NOW Scholarship Fund online at www.austincollege.edu/giving.



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Amit Masand '04 enrolled in UT Southwestern Medical School in Dallas after completing his Austin College degree with majors in business and biology. “My phenomenal pre-medical education prepared me well for medical school,” he said. He completed his M.D. in 2008 and is an internal medicine resident at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas. He plans to pursue a fellowship in gastroenterology.

His education prepared him for more than medical school. “I lived in Spain during a January Term and absorbed the language and culture of a beautiful European nation,” Amit said. “My Austin College experience allowed me to become a well-rounded individual as well as to accomplish all my goals of becoming a physician. Austin College was an experience of a lifetime.”