

The Conquistador

Volume 1, Issue 2

March 2019



DEVELOPING LEADERS

SOFT SKILLS

How we're helping to fill the gap

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Look back at March 14, 1969

YEC COMPETITION



LEADING FROM THE FRONT

Students in the Collegiate Leadership Development Program improve the skills they'll need to become tomorrow's civic leaders.

Many students today want to use college not simply to build skills and knowledge, but also as a place where they learn how to translate that knowledge into influence in their community.

The Collegiate Leadership Development Program at Dodge City Community College is helping students develop qualities that will not only lead them into good jobs, but also gain an understanding of how effective leadership can transform society.

The CLDP is a seven-session program designed to promote and facilitate constructive dialogue and interaction between students and key DC3 officials.

During the three-hour sessions, DC3 officials convey the minutiae of various college operations as well as details of their job duties and philosophies on management. Program students come away with a clearer view of how decisions are made and the way those actions affect the bigger picture.

The students discover ways to effectively present their concerns and opinions about campus issues to the officials who can affect changes. They also occasionally meet with city and county leaders to gain a better understanding of the various roles of civic administrators and departments.

The behind-the-scenes view gives students a new perspective on the challenges of leadership and the value of effective communication.

"When there is something that might need changing, it's nice to know how to be part of the solution," said Maria Gonzalez, a sophomore pre-mortuary major and current president of the International Club. "I'm learning who to talk to and how to talk to them to influence changes. I can take these lessons anywhere I go."

Hernandez completed the CLDP last year, but she's participating again as a mentor to other students and to glean even more wisdom from leaders.

"There are always new questions, new challenges that they tell us about and how they handle them," she said.

The DC3 program was started in 2016 after members of the International Club attended a conference at K-State by the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute, which developed the CLDP. They came back to DC3 where their advisor Jorge Estrella, current director of the Student Achievement and Resources Center, helped them through the maneuverings of starting up a new program.

The CLDP is almost exclusively a university program, but having gone through the series himself while in college, Estrella knew it could have real impact at the community college level.

"It gave me the opportunity to meet and question so many different people," he said. "It encourages students to participate and that's important because at the end of the day they will be our leaders."

CLDP aims to cultivate the next generation of leaders by promoting community and activism. Students gain a better understanding of the college's organizational structure and how they can play a more effective role in influencing and formulating university policy.

Simultaneously, students will help DC3 officials, including administrators, faculty, and staff, gain a better understanding of the needs and concerns of students, and a greater appreciation for student interest in campus life and university affairs.

While the organization and the program are open to all DC3 students, most CLDP participants are Hispanic. Obviously, CLDP can bolster their personal achievement, but some are hoping to use the lessons they learn through the program to lead others in raising awareness about Hispanic issues.

A primary concern of Hispanic students in the CLDP is the racial

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— Maria Gonzalez,
Sophomore

makeup of most educational leadership, according to Estrella. Cultural gaps can make approaching and appealing to mainly Caucasian leaders a daunting task for some Hispanics. Estrella said leadership training can help close those gaps and open valuable communication.

“A lot of Hispanics in our community are not aware of how to participate so they do not get involved in leadership,” he said. “They have concerns but they haven’t spoken to the right people in the right way. Learning different leadership styles allows them to ask better questions and get better results.”

Esteban Hernandez is a freshman philosophy major who recently came to the United States from Guatemala. This is his first semester of college and he immediately got involved with the CLDP. He understands that as a new arrival with a limited grasp of the language, it can be easy to be marginalized.

“Right now, maybe I can’t do some things because of my background and language,” he said, “but now I see that there is a chance.”

Hernandez wants to utilize his skills and compassion for people to help others and he sees the CLDP as an opportunity to hone those qualities. His goals from CLDP are learning how to guide other Hispanics to gain access to career and education opportunities regardless of immigration status, and to lead activities that blend Latin and American cultures.

“The program is teaching me how to be a bridge and open doors,” Hernandez said. “I’m learning how to play a more effective role in the community.”

— By Scott Edger



Employers say that colleges are turning out graduates who are technically very competent, and the vast majority of recent grads arrive with the requisite job-specific hard skills they are seeking.

On the flip side, employers steadily report a large gap when it comes to essential workplace skills – so-called soft skills – in those same well-educated and otherwise qualified job seekers.

Dodge City Community College is working to make sure students understand that the hard skills they learn in college will get them the job, but it’s typically the soft skills that will help them keep their job.

The DC3 Connection Center specializes in transfer and career readiness by providing access to resources and career and transfer guidance. Connection Center staff also coordinate with the Student Achievement Resource Center for Student Success Workshops.

The Student Success Workshops foster soft skills and employability by teaching strategies that enhance learning, critical thinking and problem solving while quietly developing essential workplace traits that are relevant to any job.

Chloe Wurst, advising specialist for the Connection Center, agrees that extra-curricular or community involvement is key to developing basic skills like communication and networking.

“I would encourage participation in any club or organization that provides opportunities for students to develop emergent leadership traits,” Wurst said, “...anything where they get out of their tech bubble and get that human interaction and develop appropriate people skills.”

Linda Almendarez is president of the DC3 Student Government Association and an elementary education major.

Running the International Club meetings as president, and now the SGA meetings, as well as monthly presentations to the DC3 Board of Trustees – Almendarez is naturally acquiring valuable workplace skills and adding to what will be her professional network.

Morales is also involved with the International Club and the Creative Writing Club as well as working as a peer tutor. She also volunteers with the Salvation Army for their holiday drives.

“For me it’s all about communication,” she said. “This has given me so much confidence. I know I can meet those kind of responsibilities.”

Her involvement with different campus organizations is developing skills she knows will serve her daily in teaching.

“I have an understanding that not everybody is the same,” she said. “Taking a leadership role is important wherever you go, even if you aren’t the boss. It’s how you can make others in the room respond that makes you a leader.”

Greg Ruehle, president and CEO of Servi-Tech, said even in the highly technical world of soil science and agri-chemicals, soft skills are the hardest to find in new applicants. Ruehle said that he will often hire for soft skills and then teach the technical side.

“I find those skills absolutely vital and they can be challenging to find,” he said. “If they have a basic knowledge of agronomy or lab services – with a wonderful personality and desire to be part of a team – we’ll teach them the technical skills because those are the type of people a company wants to invest in.”

Ruehle said that often an applicant’s education and technical aspects are a given. As he and Servi-Tech management sift through résumés and interviews, what they look for are indications of a job-seeker’s intangibles like disposition, adaptability, teamwork, prioritization, and cultural fit.

“So I like to find those students that are involved,” Ruehle said. “It could be clubs on campus, sports or intramurals ... or it’s that student working their way through school. I’m looking for people with the work ethic and determination to do what it takes to get the job done.”

Aneth Morales is a sophomore bio-chem major from Dodge City. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa – an academic honors society, with a clear scholastic focus. However, the Society emphasizes development of soft skills during its conferences though, with most activities and breakout sessions designed to foster leadership, fellowship, teamwork and service.

“I really like being part of those things,” she said. “I want that diversity so I can work on parts of myself that are underutilized.”

“I think employers will see these activities and know that I’m willing to step outside of my comfort zone and do all these things that aren’t at all related.”

“It really starts with effective social interaction,” Wurst said. “Employers want those emergent leadership qualities so they know you can communicate with many different team members and collaborate effectively. College is the perfect opportunity to develop those skills.”

Luz Cobian is a sophomore chemical engineering major headed to K-State. She’s also the DC3 chapter president of Phi Theta Kappa.

Cobian’s active participation requires a high level of prioritization and work ethic. Along with her studies to maintain the 3.5 GPA required for PTK membership, Cobian is a member of the DC3 Quiz Bowl team, the International Club and plays violin in the Dodge City Symphony. In her free time she works two jobs, as a lifeguard at the YMCA and as a tutor in the Student Achievement Resource Center.

PTK conferences gather scores of young, ambitious students together, providing crucial fellowship with like-minded people, as well as connections that may pay off beyond just new friendships.

“I really enjoy the conferences,” Cobian said. “It’s good to meet so many people who have the same kind of attitudes about education and careers. Plus, you never know when your future employer might be right there.”

If the ultimate goal of college is a good job after graduation, then students must help potential employers form the impression that you are someone who will be a motivated, enthusiastic, critical thinker who makes the most out of talents and resources.

“Having the technical skills to perform essential job duties is obviously important,” Wurst said, “but especially at the entry level, it’s those intangible soft skills that are going to set you apart.”

— By Scott Edger

DC3 Hosts Young Entrepreneurship Challenge

Nearly two dozen bright young minds gathered in the Dodge City Community College Little Theater March 7, 2019 for the annual Ford County Young Entrepreneurship Challenge.

This is the third year for the YEC, which is presented by the Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation in association with Network Kansas E-Community Partnership.

The competition awards over \$3,000 in cash prizes to middle and high school students to help promote entrepreneurship and small business development. Prizes are awarded for students' business ideas, complete with executive summaries, visual presentations and elevator pitches.

Lauren Seachris won this year's competition with an idea for a business that's already a business. The 13-year-old from Dodge City started Lauren's Treat three years ago. She bakes organic dog treats in her family's kitchen and sells them at 28 locations around Kansas.

She has made more than \$36,000 selling her treats and homemade pet accessories, but all the profits are directed for a bigger cause. Seachris has used all of Lauren's Treat's profits to build seven homes for the poor in Nicaragua – with plans for more.

"I'm really excited to see how Lauren builds her business from here," said Joann Knight, director of the Development Corporation. "She has been very active working it at trade fairs and partnering with different stores and vendors to get her products out."

Second prize went to Bucklin Junior High's Emery Comerford for her business, Truthful Greens – organic microgreens grown hydroponically. Truthful Greens grows to order and then harvests and delivers the microgreens on the same day.

Third prize went to Dodge City's Jana Garcia for her idea, Hand-Me-Ups. Garcia's concept is to take used clothing and repurpose it by adding design elements or making other changes to a garment and then reselling the merchandise.

This year's competition attracted more than double the participants from last year. "We started this as an opportunity for students from some of the smaller schools to be able to compete," Knight said, "so we're glad to have gotten more participants from out of town."

The young minds definitely embraced technology. Many of the business ideas were service or convenience oriented, often accessed through social media or app-based technology. Transportation, valet, and food delivery services were presented – all with app-based technology to access the services.

"Many of these are very viable businesses," Knight said. "The students exuded real passion about what they wanted to do."

"I was amazed at the knowledge and level of detail these students showed," said Doris Donovan, professor of business at DC3 and one of the competition judges. "A few of them were nervous, but they got out there and gave great presentations. I admire the amount of thought and work they put in."

Six other YEC competitions were going on across the state Tuesday. Nearly three dozen challenges take place throughout the school year. The statewide challenges will culminate in the state Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge April 30 at K-State in Manhattan with more than \$75,000 in prizes. 🍀

— By Scott Edger



FROM THE ARCHIVES

March 14, 1969



Practical Nursing Student Lois Clark holds a young patient at St. Anthony Hospital.



Glorinda Shearer, DCCJC Nursing Student, assists Mrs. James Maag, wife of the DCCJC history instructor, during her recent stay at St. Anthony Hospital.

Nurses Gain Clinical Experience

Class XXI of the Dodge City Community Junior College Department of Practical Nursing Education will be graduating in May, 1969. The girls are now spending every morning and all day Monday in a clinical area. This experience helps them to better understand their patients and to integrate classroom theory with practice. The Practical Nursing Department has a cooperative agreement with the local hospitals to enable the students to receive these experiences. The instructors of Nursing choose the patients to facilitate clinical learning.

Practical Nursing Students spend approximately 20 weeks caring for medical-surgical patients of all ages. Six to eight weeks are also spent caring for mothers and infants. To intensify the obstetrical experience, each student is assigned to a local clinic, to observe the care of the mothers during pregnancy and following delivery. They also have the opportunity to observe the care of the infant in the outpatient setting.

The students spend two weeks with the school nurses. This assists them to further understand the normal growth and development pattern of the children as they observe the well child. One day is spent at the Special Education Area School, for additional clinical experience.

The nursing students are kept very busy learning and gaining new experiences, but they must still give community service by helping with the Bloodmobile.

The students included in this class are: Karen Bice, Iva Bricker, Lois Clark, Dorothy Fisher, Bonnie Gerberding, Vicki Gunderson, Becky Hjorth Smith, Donna Maughlin, Alyce Mead, Natalia Montes, Eleanor Nielson, Evelyn Preston, Glorinda Shearer, Donna Stephenson, Mary Vonfeldt, Becky Wade, Pam Wade, and Lois Theleman. 🍀

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