



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Spring enrollment looks good

By Sam Dieter
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Dr. George McNulty, vice president of student affairs for Colby Community College, told college trustees at their November meeting that enrollment for the spring semester is running well ahead of last year.

A total of 505 students had signed up for 6,667 credit hours in the spring semester by Monday, he said. By the same time last year, those numbers stood at 405 students and 5,253.5 credit hours.

At the August meeting at the start of the school year, McNulty had reported 954 students enrolled for the fall term, a 9 percent drop in enrollment from the year before. President Stephen Vacik suggested that new recruiting efforts should start to bring in more students in the coming years.

McNulty also reported that his department had an initial meeting to look into enrollment management.

Retired anatomy and physiology instructor Tom Moorhous is helping the college with retention, McNulty said.

He said that Charles Keefer, the director of residence life, and three resident advisers had gone to the Kansas Association of Resident Assistant meeting with representatives from nine other schools, and won the crowd favorite award for a banner they made.

A total of 268 people were living in the college dorms, and about 175 visited the student health service office in October.

The college reported academic alerts on 102 students by Oct. 18, but expects 75 to 80 percent of these students to still be in college by the spring. Campus security reported that six students had been arrested.

Dr. Greg Nichols, the vice president of student affairs, reported that his department has extended online student evaluation to all

courses. He said this has saved the college \$1,000 and "many hours in document work."

A visit from state Board of Regents representative Barbara Stapleton to look into how the college spends Perkins program money went well, Nichols reported, and an agreement outlining the college's goals until 2016 has been submitted to the regents.

The school is advertising for a new beef program and farm and ranch instructor and had interviews for a director of nursing on that Monday and Tuesday. A new Title III project administrator position has been accepted.

Dr. Xuemi Yang, vice president of institutional effectiveness, reported that the college has completed three surveys, two reports and two data requests.

Athletic Director Sturdy reported that the college has won two Jayhawk West Conference championships in volleyball men's crosscountry the Region VI championship in men's crosscountry and has become the region VI runner-up in volleyball.

Volleyball coach Carey Jones was named Jayhawk West coach of the year and men's cross country and track coach James Ortiz was named Region VI coach of the year for the second year in a row.

Debbie Schwanke, public information director, thanked everyone who helped out during the college's homecoming week.

The college was rated 10th out of 900 community colleges in the country by Bankrate Inc., based in part on low tuition and the high percentage of students receiving financial aid. Schwanke said the college is planning to change billboard signs on Interstate 70 to show this information. A banner will be placed in front of campus to advertise the rating.

Doug McDowall, information technology technician, reported

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Colby Police Cpl. Ray Schweitzer and Officer Lance Finley (above) moved in during a mock enactment Tuesday at Colby High School. Police Chief Ron Alexander played a would-be school shooter (above right) during a live shooter drill for schools faculty, walking around the school only to find his intended victims locked safely in classrooms. School faculty and staff either participated in the drama or watched. After the drill, Alexander led a debriefing (right) to review what had happened. Middle school Principal Robb Ross (left, below) talked with officers Stacy Brooks and Sam Steele about the drill.

SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



Schools study shooter risks

By Sam Dieter
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The faculty of the Colby School District had a drill at the high school Tuesday to prepare for an emergency.

"It's so quiet," Police Chief Ron Alexander remarked as he walked through the halls, dressed as a "school shooter."

He started outside the school with a starter pistol and cap gun, civilian clothing over his uniform.

A group of faculty from the district's schools played students, seated in the high school cafeteria, while others stood around the sides of the room and watched. Athletic Director Larry Gabel walked into the cafeteria told everyone there was an emergency. The "students" all left quickly

when they got word that they were in danger. Moments later, a couple of faculty members rushed in from outside and shut themselves in the front office.

Alexander fired a couple of shots with the pistols after he let himself in through the gym entrance. He walked through the halls and fired a couple of times towards one of the classroom doors. But everyone had shut themselves in a room.

A pair of police officers entered the school through a different hall with simulated weapons, swept the school, and took out the "shooter."

After the drill, Alexander told the faculty that quiet is exactly what he wanted to hear. Having a sense of situational awareness when the school is threatened is

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When Holly Whitaker notified the Chamber of Commerce she was moving, businesses here gathered logos from shirts and hats and made a quilt to remind her of Colby (above). It was on display at her farewell reception last Friday at the Sleep Inn Convention Center. Whitaker and her husband Adam are moving to England, where he accepted a transfer with Shelbourne-Reynolds.



Chamber head says goodbye



Holly Whitaker

To the People of Colby:

They say time flies when you are having fun, and I have had so very much fun as the Chamber executive director.

As many of you can tell by the smile on my face when I entered your business or saw you at an event, I absolutely loved my job. My position at the Chamber has been so much more to me than a job; it has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Let me first thank you chamber members for allowing me to serve you. I also want to thank the Chamber's "volunteer" board members, past and present, as well as the Ambassadors and Diplomats, for their support and hard work over the years. I also want to thank our administrative assistant, Lottie McLemore, Convention and Visitors Bureau Director Leilani Thomas, and Economic Development Director Christy Preston. You will not find more

fun, kind, caring and hard-working people. I am so grateful for everything they have taught me.

I am thankful for the fabulous friendships I have developed with so many of you. Each and every one of you in your own unique way brings something beautiful to this place we call home. It is all those unique gifts that make Thomas County the great county that it is.

Every individual in this county works hard to make it a great place to live, work, shop and visit. Thomas County also comes together in a way most other communities do not, and that is why it is thriving now and will continue to thrive. I am proud to have lived here and I am privileged to call Thomas County my home.

I close by extending my thanks for the time we had together. It was a pleasure – indeed, an honor – to have served as the executive director of the Chamber these past

7 1/2 years. I will miss it dearly, and I will miss Thomas County.

What I will miss most is all of YOU. The love, compassion and well wishes you extended to me and Adam over the years, and especially during my last few days at the Chamber and at our farewell open house, will always hold a special place in my heart. I'm thankful for every lesson learned and for what each of you have brought to my life. I am truly a better person for having known and worked with each of you.

May you and your family have a Happy Christmas and a fabulous 2014. I wish you all the best in the future.

Holly Whitaker, Colby outgoing executive director Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce

