



## Lamar Community College President's Report August 2023



### **Transform the student experience.**

#### **Student Spotlight – Garret Stecklein**

In today's swiftly evolving agricultural landscape, farmers are embracing precision agriculture, a pioneering approach that melds computer technology with farm equipment, including drones and satellite applications. Precision agriculture initiatives furnish farmers with cutting-edge technologies and data-driven insights, revolutionizing farming practices. By meticulously gathering data on soil conditions, crop health, and weather patterns, farmers optimize their methods, yielding cost savings and heightened productivity. This technique also facilitates precise crop management, enabling farmers to tailor irrigation, fertilization, and pest control strategies to distinct field areas, bolstering yield and quality.

Lamar Community College's (LCC) Precision Agriculture program equips students with essential skills and knowledge to implement these modern techniques in contemporary farming. The program's curriculum encompasses an array of topics including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) applications, satellite-based guidance systems (GNSS), auto-steer technology, unmanned aircraft systems (drones), and the installation and troubleshooting of diverse precision agriculture hardware. Students gain hands-on

experience with state-of-the-art equipment and software, honing their readiness for real-world challenges in the field.

Garret Stecklein, a dedicated student in LCC's Precision Agriculture program, exemplifies the program's commitment to cultivating future farming leaders. Garret graduated from LCC in May with his Associate of General Studies degree in Agriculture. In the fall, he will continue pursuing his passion for farming with emerging technologies through LCC's Precision Agriculture Certificate program. Garret's interest in Precision Agriculture germinated during his role as a crop scout on a Sublette, Kansas farm. Introduced to precision farming strategies, he collaborated with the lead on action plans for weed management and pest treatment. His fascination with navigational aspects grew after learning about Global Positioning Systems (GPS) in farming.

Though yet to complete his Precision Agriculture Certificate, Garret already employs his LCC-acquired skills in his equipment company job, installing and troubleshooting guidance systems. His advice for potential Precision Agriculture program students is unequivocal: "If you're interested in it, you need to do it." He emphasizes the field's growth and the demand for professionals who can keep pace with advancing technology.

*"Lamar Community College is committed to providing relevant, high-quality, high-skill career and technical education that will produce a qualified and skilled workforce ready to support and help grow local and regional industries,"* says Dr. Reyes, President of Lamar Community College. By enrolling in LCC's Precision Agriculture program, aspiring students position themselves for rewarding careers that leverage advanced technologies, enabling them to shape the future of farming while embracing the challenges ahead.



### **First Games of the Season**

August 17<sup>th</sup> brought about the first games of the season for Lamar Community College. Runnin' Lopes Women's and Men's Soccer played home games on Lamar's new Runnin' Lopes field designed specifically for our collegiate soccer teams. In an exhilarating soccer game that unfolded on a sun-drenched afternoon, the LCC Lopes clashed with the Dodge City Conquistadors on the field with unwavering determination. The players showcased their exceptional skills, executing precise passes, intricate dribbles, and powerful shots. Tensions ran high as the score remained deadlocked for the first half of the game, each team's defense thwarting the other's attempts to break through. The matches ended with narrow defeats, leaving both teams exhausted but exhilarated by the intense competition and unforgettable moments that had unfolded on the pitch.



### **July and August Orientation**

New Student Orientation (NSO) was held July 17<sup>th</sup> and August 18<sup>th</sup>. NSO is a one-day program that guides new students through the registration process while having fun, meeting their fellow classmates, and familiarizing themselves with the Lamar Community College environment. The community expo part of orientation was a huge success with attendance from multiple community representatives. This year, our Admissions Coordinator, Laurie Ybarra, and Success Coach, Deon Williams, have introduced new practices to the Orientation schedule. During check in, students will be guided to computers to assist them in completing their registration or even finishing their application. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to get a first look at what their online dashboard is going to include and how to navigate the different options they have for their schedules, payments, transcripts, and so much more. New Student Orientation is just the beginning for most students when entering college, and for these new Lopes it couldn't have gone better!





### First Week of School

After a hot and humid summer, Lamar Community College was more than happy to welcome students and faculty back to campus. The inaugural week of college unfolded as a whirlwind of new experiences and boundless possibilities. Amidst the bustling campus, a tapestry of orientations, introductions, and social gatherings welcomed fresh-faced students into the academic fold. Eager faces navigated campus maps and helpful documents provided at information booths organized by the President's Office. Residence Life offered donuts and words of encouragement for students who were needing a bit of a boost to begin their first days of school. From the first of many class lectures that laid the foundation for semesters ahead, to the spontaneous conversations at dormitories that cemented newfound friendships, the first week encapsulated a blend of academic curiosity and social exploration. As the week culminated in a vibrant welcome event, the campus pulsated with a sense of unity, marking the beginning of an enriching journey that promised growth, challenges, and transformative experiences.



## Ag Olympics

What better way to test your agricultural skills than to host an Ag Olympic event for your class? Lamar Community College hosted Ag Olympics this year in our Equine Complex arena. Ag Olympics is a social and networking event for LCC students in the equine, rodeo and agriculture programs and is open to the community. Students from each of these programs competed in Olympic style events of agility, strength, and grace with an agricultural flare. Hay bale relays, manure cart obstacle course, ribbon roping and goat tying are just a few of the events that can be witnessed. This was a rather informal event that brought together the instructors, students, and community members to exchange ideas, share stories and build lasting relationships that will carry them farther than their short journey with LCC.



## Transform our own Workforce Experience

### New Employees

#### Welcome Deon Williams

Lamar Community College would like to welcome a shiny new face to campus. Deon Williams, has been hired as our new Success Coach. This role is replacing the Recruiter role and the job duties have been altered to reflect the new responsibilities of this position. A dynamic and personable Success Coach, adept at building connections with prospective students, parents, and educators alike. Deon attended Lamar Community College as a student athlete and played basketball as a proud Runnin' Lopec. Deon's love for the sport and for LCC drove him to take on the role as an assistant coach while finishing up his degree. His enthusiasm for guiding students through the admissions process, coupled with his deep understanding of the college's offerings, makes him a valuable resource for aspiring students seeking the ideal educational path. Through personalized interactions and insightful presentations, Deon leaves a lasting impression on potential students, inspiring them to envision a successful future at the College.



#### LCC Graduates Empower Future Generations

Lamar Community College (LCC) has always been dedicated to providing exceptional education and creating avenues of opportunity for its students. This commitment extends beyond education, fostering connections between graduates and employment opportunities within both the community and the institution. This commitment is evident in the stories of two exceptional individuals, Brianna Perez and Michael Grudt, who recently completed their studies at LCC and now contribute as full-time staff members.

Brianna and Michael's journey has come full circle. Both started their LCC journey through concurrent enrollment while in high school, worked part-time for the college during their studies, and transitioned seamlessly into full-time roles upon graduation. Their dedication and familiarity with the college environment have enriched their contributions in their current roles.

Brianna's decision to work at LCC was rooted in her comfort with the campus environment and her desire to assist others. Starting in a work-study position in the Back-to-Work department, she was promoted to the Student Success Workforce Navigator role after graduation. Brianna takes pride in helping adult learners overcome barriers to education by connecting them with scholarships and resources, ensuring they can pursue higher education without financial worries.

Michael's journey also began with part-time work at LCC while pursuing his degree. Drawn to a Back-to-Work Assistant role, he transitioned to the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) Navigator position after graduation. Michael finds fulfillment in breaking down barriers for students and providing them with the support they need. His relatability as a recent graduate eases student concerns and allows him to guide them through their educational journeys.

Brianna and Michael's roles highlight LCC's knack for recognizing local talent while cultivating a sense of belonging among current students. This aligns with the vision of LCC's President, Dr. Reyes, who emphasizes community engagement and inspiration. Their successful transition from students to staff underscores the transformative power of education and motivates current students to explore similar paths within their communities. Moreover, their firsthand experience as former students equips them to better understand the needs and aspirations of current students, making them invaluable mentors and role models who demonstrate the fruits of hard work, dedication, and passion in their chosen fields.



### **Faculty In-Service Week**

During the college in-service week, the campus buzzed with a unique energy as faculty and staff came together for a week of professional development and collaboration. Workshops, trainings, and discussions took center stage, fostering a dynamic environment for learning and growth. With a focus on innovation and pedagogical advancement, educators shared insights into effective teaching methodologies and explored the new technologies brought in by the IREPO grant to enhance the learning experience for students. Administrative teams strategized for the upcoming academic year, aligning their goals with the institution's mission and vision. Amidst the insightful sessions, there were moments of camaraderie, laughter, and renewed enthusiasm as colleagues reconnected and forged new connections with incoming faculty. The in-service week proved to be a vital time for the college community to recharge, gain fresh perspectives, and reinforce their commitment to delivering quality education.



**Student and Faculty Back-to-School Bash**

The campus came alive with excitement as staff and students joined together to celebrate a vibrant back-to-school party. Laughter echoed through the air as old friends reunited and new connections were formed. The event was a perfect blend of fun and inspiration, featuring colorful decorations, a vibrant photo booth, an engaging and electric dj, and interactive games that saw both teachers and students enjoying the fun. The festive atmosphere fostered a sense of unity and anticipation for the upcoming academic year. With a variety of delicious treats and refreshments, the party provided a chance for everyone to unwind before the start of classes. As the event drew to a close, the waning music left behind a contagious spirit of camaraderie that promised an exciting and engaging year ahead for all.





## Create education without barriers through transformational partnerships.



### **Southeastern BOCES**

Earlier this year, Lamar Community College reached out to area schools teaching our concurrent enrollment instruction to better understand their IT needs. Today, we're delighted to announce that LCC is providing a total of 65 laptops to concurrent enrollment students and instructors! Casey Emick (LCC IT Staff) and Eddie Recio (SE BOCES IT Staff) were caught in action at the BOCES Office this morning, exchanging the first shipment of 21 brand-new laptops.

This fantastic project is made possible by the generous funding awarded to LCC by the Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund. This funding is intended to create sustainable innovation that improves student learning, closes equity gaps, and enhances operation efficiency for K-12 through higher education.

We are excited to have this project underway and for the opportunities that this will create for students and instructors of concurrent enrollment!

### **Rodeo Bible Camp**

Lamar Community College is thrilled to announce the successful completion of the annual Rodeo Bible Camp, held in partnership with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. This year's camp, which took place from June 28 until June 30, saw an impressive attendance of 27 passionate young students, ranging in ages from 12 to 18 years old.

The Rodeo Bible Camp provides a unique opportunity for students to enhance their rodeo skills while deepening their faith. Participants resided in LCC's dormitories and had the privilege of keeping their horses at the college's equine complex throughout the duration of the camp. The collaboration between LCC and FCA ensured a comprehensive program that combined rodeo training with spiritual growth.

The camp featured an impressive lineup of industry professionals who shared their insights and experiences with the young participants, delving into both matters of faith and the intricacies of their professions. Speakers included Miles Baker and TJ Watts for team roping, Sydni Blanchard for barrel racing, and Channing Hawks for ranch horse disciplines. Adding to the exceptional support network, two recent LCC graduates and three current LCC students took on crucial roles as devotional leaders and camp counselors. Among these talented individuals were two members of the LCC Ranch Horse Team, enriching the camp with their first-hand knowledge and understanding of the college's rodeo program.

The success of the camp would not have been possible without the generous contributions from various organizations and individuals. LCC extends its deepest gratitude to Lamar Christian Church, High Plains

Fellowship, First Baptist Church, and Springfield Baptist Church for their donations of meals, ensuring that the students were well-nourished throughout the camp. Furthermore, LCC is immensely grateful to Cy Homm and Wyatt Wollert for their donations of cattle, which played a vital role in the practical training sessions.



## Sand and Sage Fair

In a heartwarming display of community engagement, Lamar Community College employees enthusiastically volunteered their time and talents at the local Sand and Sage County Fair. Setting aside their professional roles, they stepped into different roles as hair stylists, food vendors, and activity coordinators, creating a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere for fairgoers of all ages. With their college spirit shining brightly, these dedicated volunteers showcased their commitment to both education and community involvement. Their efforts not only enriched the fair experience but also highlighted the college's strong ties to the local neighborhood, fostering a sense of unity and goodwill that resonated throughout the event.



## Community Back to School Celebration

Lamar Community College employees came together with boundless enthusiasm to volunteer at a lively Back to School Bash hosted by a local ministry, extending a warm welcome to students and families. They organized engaging activities, distributed school supplies, and facilitated information to parents considering going back to school themselves, turning the event into a memorable celebration. Their dedication and commitment to fostering a positive start to the academic year were evident in every smile they shared and every activity they led. The Back to School Bash stood as a testament to the college's unwavering support for education and its vibrant role in the local community.



## Coffee with the Lamar City Administrator

Eager and attentive, Lamar Community College students and staff engaged in a unique opportunity to meet with the Lamar city administrator, gaining insights into the inner workings of local governance. Seated in our comfortable and well-lit Student Union, the attendees posed thoughtful questions and listened intently as the administrator, Rob Evans, discussed the multifaceted responsibilities of city management. From urban planning and community development to public services and budget allocation, the conversation illuminated the Rob's commitment to enhancing the city's livability. As the meeting progressed, the students gained a newfound appreciation for the intricacies of civic leadership and the collaborative efforts required to shape the future of their community. The students interacted with Rob and asked him questions and gave suggestions as to what they hope to see happen in Lamar. The encounter left an indelible mark, fostering a deeper understanding of the vital role played by city administrators in shaping the places we call home.



**Redefine our value proposition through accessibility, affordability, quality, accountability, resource development, and operational excellence.**

### **LCC's Financial Aid Director joins Executive Board (CAFAA)**

At Lamar Community College, we are committed to supporting our students' academic pursuits by providing exceptional financial aid services. Financial aid serves as a critical bridge between students' aspirations and their ability to pursue higher education. Many students face financial barriers that can hinder their dreams, but financial aid aims to eliminate these obstacles by offering various assistance programs. Scholarships, grants, work-study opportunities, and loans are among the resources available to help students fund their education. These programs make college more affordable and provide avenues for students from diverse backgrounds to access quality education.

Financial aid is not just an administrative function but a cornerstone of our institution's ethos. We recognize financial concerns should never be a deterrent for students striving to achieve their educational goals. Our Office of Financial Aid works diligently to ensure students have the information and resources to navigate the financial aid process.

We recently achieved a significant milestone in our quest to provide students with all the best resources for success, as our Financial Aid Director, Jordan Kemp, was newly elected to the Executive Board of the Colorado Association of Financial Aid Administrators (CAFAA). This accomplishment further solidifies the College's dedication to providing students with access to comprehensive financial aid resources while proving that our team is committed to our mission to Enrich Lives through Learning.

Mr. Kemp was voted in as the Treasurer-Elect for the Executive Board of the Colorado Association of Financial Aid Administrators on May 2, 2023. Joining the Lamar Community College family in January 2023, Mr. Kemp holds a master's degree and brings a strong background in executive leadership to the organization, along with a passion for serving and assisting the students of Southeast Colorado. He has hit the ground running and looks forward to serving Colorado's Institutions of Higher Education as CAFAA's Treasurer-Elect.

Established in 1967 to serve the needs of financial aid professionals across the state, CAFAA strives to connect financial aid administrators with resources and support to help make higher education more accessible for students. The organization provides training, resources, and networking opportunities to financial aid professionals to assist them in their positions, which are critically important to the success of every college in the state.

Mr. Kemp is very excited to be elected to this position, which is a three-year role with the Colorado Association of Financial Aid Administrators. Mr. Kemp will serve as Treasurer-Elect in the 2023-2024 aid year, Treasurer in 2024-2025, and Past Treasurer in 2025-2026. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Kemp on his achievement, and we take great pride in having him as an esteemed member of the Lope family.



## High School Tour

The scent of fresh sawdust hung heavy in the air as the Wiley high school senior class embarked on an educational journey through the house that the Lamar Community College Construction Trades program has been tasked to renovate. The students were immersed in a world of hands-on learning. The tour unveiled the intricate choreography of skilled tradespeople as they worked on various projects, from carpentry and masonry to window installations. Enthusiastic guides explained the science and artistry behind each trade, igniting curiosity in the young minds witnessing the tangible fruits of labor. The site's dynamic energy coupled with the chance to ask questions from our lead instructor and construction manager, Jake Specht, provided a memorable experience, broadening horizons and potentially sparking future aspirations in the realm of construction and craftsmanship.



### **Innovate and Make Space Summer Camp**

Even though most students have left for the summer, the Innovate and Make Space (IMS) is just as busy as ever. If you walk by the IMS you will more often than not hear the hum of sewing machines and even smell the wood engraver hard at work. Michele Girard, Director of the Imagine and Make Space (IMS) has organized several artistic summer camp activities throughout the summer available to the entire community. Michele offers a range of crafts and certifications from sewing, quilting, fiber and knitting, beading, jewelry making, leather crafts, toy making, and ceramics/pottery. Many families from the local communities take advantage of these summer camps and let their children explore their creativity with us. Each camp provides a different theme and materials for attendees to learn a new machine/participate in a new craft such as handmade tote bags, embroidery on personal items and watercolor art. In July, the Michele introduced a beading class to the otherwise full list of crafts to choose from in the IMS.



### **Lamar Community College Hosts Visit with Attorney General**

Lamar Community College (LCC) had the honor of welcoming Colorado's Attorney General, Phil Weiser, to its campus on Friday, July 21. The visit was an opportunity for the Lamar Community College, a leading institution in construction trade education, to highlight its vital contribution to the Colorado Partnership for Education and Rural Revitalization as well as showcase the latest Construction Trades renovation projects, reflecting LCC's commitment to empowering the local community through education and skill development. The discussions and documents provided during the visit highlighted the pivotal role educational institutions play in the economic growth and overall well-being of rural communities. "Attorney General Weiser applauded Lamar Community College's efforts in providing accessible and quality education to students in the Southeast Colorado region, emphasizing the importance of quality workforce training education as a foundation for sustainable development" shared Vice President McLemore.

Lamar Community College's latest Construction Trades renovation project in Wiley, Colorado was a highlight of the visit. The project exemplified the College's commitment to providing students with hands-on experiences and practical skills essential in a high priority occupation in our region. Attorney General Phil Weiser and the accompanying delegation were thoroughly impressed by the transformation of the project home and the dedication of LCC's students and instructors in producing a high-quality renovation. Students gained practical, hands-on experiences, preparing them for real-world challenges in their chosen fields. Building upon the success of the Colorado Partnership for Education



and Rural Revitalization, Career Advance Colorado, fueled by House Bill 23-1246's funding of \$38.6 million, will fully cover enrollment costs for training programs in sectors facing significant workforce shortages. This program, signed by Governor Jared Polis and supported by key legislators like Colorado House Speaker Julie McCluskie, Senators Janet Buckner and Perry Will, and Representative Rose Pugliese, is set to go into effect in the weeks ahead. Students seeking training in these vital areas can look forward to receiving tuition support from Career Advance Colorado, further strengthening the state's and LCC's commitment to educational excellence and economic prosperity for all.

"We are honored to have hosted Attorney General Weiser on our campus and to have had the opportunity to showcase the impact of our training programs," said President Reyes. "We firmly believe that an accessible, affordable, quality post-secondary education is essential for the prosperity of both individuals and the community we serve. Our commitment to providing top-notch career and technical programs is unweaving, as it directly addresses the needs of our region's economy and helps individuals achieve economic success."



## Off to the Races!

The Horse Training and Management (HTM) and the Equine Business Management (EBM) programs here at LCC have taken a unique approach to hands-on learning. As part of their commitment to providing comprehensive equestrian education, these programs partner with the surrounding communities and local ranchers to supply the HTM and EBM students with horses to develop essential horsemanship skills right from the start. Some ranchers have partnered with the Equine program at LCC for a long time. Mark Freeman, an LCC Alumni of the Equine programs, has been trusting us with his horses for 34 years!

The week of August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 has been a busy one for the Equine programs as the EBM students moved their horses to the stalls and HTM students were paired with their colts. By working closely with these young horses, students gain valuable insights into training, care, and bonding, fostering a deep understanding of equine behavior and communication. This immersive experience not only enriches their equestrian knowledge but also instills qualities of patience, responsibility, and empathy. The program's integration of colts enhances the learning journey, equipping students with a well-rounded foundation in equine studies while nurturing a lifelong appreciation for the art of horsemanship.

