Leadership and Celebration

The CLARA group wrapped up the season with a delayed visit to Grayson College. The trip, originally scheduled for March, was moved back to May 1 due to weather.

Celebrating the conclusion of a successful CLARA year was a dominant theme of the day. The final chapters of *The Leadership Challenge* focus on recognizing contributions and celebrating values and victories.

Grayson College President Jeremy McMillen was joined by Grayson College Board of Trustees member and CLARA graduate Debbie Barnes-Plyler to discuss what leadership means at Grayson College.

Campus tours gave us the opportunity to see some of Grayson’s areas of educational excellence in action.

Gerald Stanglin led the group in a retrospective of the CLARA year following lunch, and Groups 9 and 10 led in a time of recognizing accomplishments for the year and celebrating victories.

Cake was sliced, party hats were worn, awards distributed. In all, it was a wonderful day to end the CLARA year.

The next meeting is graduation, September 18, 2015 at the Fall Leadership Conference, Grayson College in Denison.
Until North Central Texas College in Gainesville hired Brett Wallace as NCTC President, Jeremy McMillen was the youngest community college president in the State of Texas.

Dr. McMillen sat down with Debbie Barnes-Plyler, who currently serves on the Grayson College Board of Trustees, and talked with CLARA about what it takes to be a successful leader in a community college.

Dr. McMillen has crafted a good working relationship with the Board of Trustees, and together they have developed the “1500 by 2020” strategic plan for Grayson College.

Dr. Barnes-Plyler, who participated in CLARA in the 2007 cohort, re-emphasized the importance of cooperation in administration, and the value of a Board of Trustees that places the interests of the college and the community it serves ahead of personal interests and ambitions.

Dr. McMillen also emphasized the importance of recognizing that the interests of the college were greater than the interests of one individual. He noted the value of the Board looking beyond his tenure, mentioning that it is important that the institution continue to move forward even after he is gone.

Dr. Barnes-Plyler discussed her training and work history as an important aspect of her ability to fulfill her role as a member of the Board of Trustees.

A moment of reflection on a year just past

What were your favorite moments? What impressed you most about the campuses we visited? Which campus presidents gave you the most information and made you think?

CLARA participants took a moment following lunch to reflect on the content of this year’s CLARA program and share what was most memorable and important to them.

Some fondly remembered the personal stories of Dr. Elva LeBlanc of Tarrant County College-Northwest Campus. Others liked the talk from Dr. Jennifer Wimbish on how leaders conduct themselves with others. Some remembered Dr. Colleen Smith’s presentation on the Enemies of Leadership, while others spoke of Dr. Bill Holda’s challenges of leading in the new century.

Memories of campus tours were also revisited: Kilgore’s School of Nursing and Process Technology Center, The Library and Science Learning Center at Tarrant County College Northwest Campus, and the IT Department and Student Services Center at Trinity Valley Community College.

Working together to accomplish goals and move forward

leader in a community college.

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Campus Tours

Welding Rodeo

The Grayson College campus was alive with activity for the CLARA visit. Students from area high schools and colleges were on hand for a number of events, including a Welding Rodeo, competition in Cosmetology, and competitive events in Culinary Arts.

Aspiring welders gathered to compete for prizes and recognition at the Welding Rodeo. Students who competed in the event had the opportunity to display their welding skills by completing assigned tasks and being judged on the quality and skill of their work.

Competitors also had the opportunity to show their creative flair by building something uniquely theirs, such as a sculpture or a piece of equipment.

The virtual welding classroom gives students the ability to practice their welding skills without using actual materials which allows them to conserve metal and fuel. Their work is displayed on a computer screen while they "weld" with a virtual torch. Instructors can use the computer-generated results to teach the student how to improve their techniques and abilities.

In addition to the welding program, Grayson also has a body shop where students may practice auto body repair, as well as a small appliance repair program, where students can work on motors, compressors, storage tanks, and other small equipment.

Virtual welding allows competitors to practice their skills while conserving materials and making judging more consistent (top).

Students prepare for their competition in the welding rodeo (above).

Heather, who is also a student in the welding program at Grayson College, gives an overview and guides a tour of the Welding Rodeo competition (left).
Campus Tours

Cosmetology and Culinary Arts

Students competed Cosmetology and Culinary Arts events as part of Senior Day at Grayson College.

This year’s Senior Day theme was "Clash of the Vikings," and cosmetology students competed in events based on an image of the goddess Aphrodite. Students practiced their skills in hair cutting, hair styling, makeup application, creating final products inspired by or duplicating the image, as shown in our CLARION cover photo. Cosmetology students also competed in consulting, manicures and pedicures, including acrylic nail application and design, under the watchful eyes of the Grayson College Cosmetology department.

Meanwhile, it was a busy day for Rusty Weatherly and the Culinary Arts program at Grayson College. In addition to grilling lunch for parents and students from area high schools visiting the campus, the Culinary Arts program was also hosting its own competition inspired by the goddess Demeter.

Hosted by Grayson College’s Six Ninety One restaurant, the culinary competition gave students the opportunity to impress judges with their abilities in food preparation, presentation, as well as innovation. In-kitchen cameras allowed judges, as well as friends and family of the competitors, to watch the students work while in the comfort of the Six Ninety One dining room.

Rusty Weatherly, Director of the Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts program at Grayson College, also noted the school’s Viticulture and Enology program, based at the T.V. Munson Center at Grayson College.

Cosmetology students compete in the areas of hair, nails, and makeup (above). One competitor works on hair and make-up fashions (top), while another adds designs to spice up a simple haircut (above).

Rusty Weatherly, Director of the Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts program at Grayson College, explains how his program prepares students for jobs in the hospitality and food service industry (left).
Chapter 10: Recognize Contributions
Carlos Cruz, Yolanda Sifuentes, Shereah Taylor

Group 9’s presentation focused on recognizing contributions. Everyone took a few minutes to pause and reflect on a time in their lives when they had received recognition from someone for something they had done. All were asked to remember what it was that made that recognition special.

In almost everyone’s recollection of the event, whether it was recognition for an achievement at work, or recognition for something on a personal level, none of the recognitions involved a monetary or financial reward.

In almost every case, the value of the recognition came from someone taking the time and making the effort to compliment the individual for a job well-done. Memories included recognition by parents, children, bosses, and co-workers.

Carlos, Yolanda and Shereah then encouraged everyone to be more aware of the value of leaders giving recognition to those they lead. Ideas and suggestions were presented by the CLARA group at large as to how leaders could be more diligent about recognizing the contributions of those on their team. Thank you cards were passed around, and everyone was given the opportunity to thank someone who had been especially beneficial to them during the year.

Chapter 11: Celebrate Values and Victories
Kaleb Cameron, Leon Deutsch, John Raulston, Charles Smith, Rosalyn Walker

Group 10’s presentation finished up the study of The Leadership Challenge with an emphasis on celebrating values.

John Raulston shared how, during a personally difficult time in his life, the support and acceptance that he received from his superiors at his school helped him to feel accepted and part of the team. Their willingness to be there for him made a deep impression on him and made him more willing to be there for them.

It’s not a celebration without a dance, so Group 10 taught everyone how to do the Cupid Shuffle. Then the group spent five minutes or so enjoying and practicing their newly-acquired skill.

Group 10 then provided backpacks with trophies, cards and party favors. CLARA participants were encouraged to present the trophies and cards to individuals in CLARA who had helped them throughout the CLARA program.

In a final act of celebration, Group 10 provided cake, and everyone had the opportunity to kick back and relax before heading home from the last CLARA meeting of the year.

Individual projects are due in the CLARA course site by July 15th, and graduation for this year’s cohort will be September 18, back at Grayson College. See you all there! In the meantime, have a great summer!
CLARA in Action

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