Jeff Pickering is new Information Technology Director at Martin Community College

As of May 1, the Information Technology (IT) Department at Martin Community College (MCC) has a new director - Jeff Pickering. He brings with him extensive IT experience in the community college system. Prior to accepting the position at MCC, he was the IT director at Roanoke-Chowan Community College for more than two years, and for eleven years prior to that, the Systems Administrator at Johnston Community College. His leadership skills were honed during his eight years in the United States Marine Corps where he attained the rank of Sergeant and served on a gun crew during Desert Storm.

Originally from Tinley Park Illinois, Pickering earned an AAS degree in Local Area Networks from Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Park, Illinois in 1999. After moving to North Carolina, he earned a BS degree in Industrial Technology from East Carolina University in 2008.

Pickering is well versed in reviewing and developing policies and procedures as they relate to technology – especially IT business continuity plans. He believes in team work and relies heavily on cross training to achieve that purpose. He is also adept at establishing and maintaining systems – like E-commerce and E-procurement - to reduce paperwork and provide students with alternative ways to register and pay for classes. And most importantly, he is accustomed to keeping thousands of personal computers up and running simultaneously and collaboratively – an essential component in keeping a college campus running smoothly.

MCC President, Dr. Ann Britt, stated, “We are so pleased that Mr. Pickering has made the move to Martin Community College. As we all know, in today’s society, technology is intertwined with service delivery and the IT direc-

Continued on pg. 3
The Medical Assisting Program (MAP) at Martin Community College (MCC) recently went through a rigorous reaccreditation process conducted by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). It was initiated by the recommendation of the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB).

The Medical Assisting program went through an intense self-study and an on-site visit. CAAHEP Site Surveyors visited MCC March 16-17. The examiners were impressed with the MCC program and scored the program exceptionally high.

According to the program’s coordinator and lead instructor, Marty Flynn, “The accreditation process requires lots of time and hard work. To go through this one with such high marks is a huge accomplishment for this department and college.”

The surveyors noted exceptional strength in the program’s Director, Marty Flynn. They were impressed with her level of knowledge and dedication to the program as well as to student success. Interviews of both students and graduates were equally complimentary of Flynn’s teaching style. Many voiced their appreciation of her caring and encouraging manner.

The program’s Clinical Coordinator, Cathy Warren, was also singled out as being a key component of its success. She was recognized for her enthusiastic and supportive style of working with the students in achieving their personal goals. The graduates noted in their evaluations that Warren helped prepare them to be professional and successful in the real world.

The examiners were also impressed with the program’s very supportive MAP Advisory Board and their invaluable input in identifying the needs of the community. Program advisors are instrumental in keeping all college programs up-to-date and relevant for the community they serve. In fact, the only recommendation made by the examiners was to add a student and a community member to the MAP Advisory Board.

Medical Assisting students and recent graduates were also polled by the surveyors. They too, were very complimentary of the program as a whole.

Ongoing accreditation is extremely important to MCC. Reaccreditation allows MCC graduates to sit for the (Certified Medical Assistant) CMA exam which is a key component in becoming nationally certified in the field.

A campus-wide memo sent out by Dr. Jennifer Burruss, MCC’s Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services, stated, “Apparently all the late nights, gathering of data, and months of planning paid off today. I am happy to report that the accrediting body for our Medical Assisting Program, CAAHEP, concluded their site visit this morning with only one minor recommendation!! For those of you unfamiliar with the accreditation process, this is almost unheard of. Our current students, former students, the M. A. Advisory Board, and area employers were instrumental in making this possible. Congratulations!”

The Medical Assisting curriculum prepares multi-skilled health care professionals to perform administrative, clinical, and laboratory procedures. Course work includes instruction in scheduling appointments, coding and processing insurance accounts, billing, collections, medical transcription, computer operations, assisting with examinations/treatments, performing routine laboratory procedures, electrocardiography, supervised medication administration, and ethical/legal issues associated with patient care.
Pickering - cont. from page 1

tor is essential in making those two things work together seamlessly. His knowledge of cutting edge technology is a tremendous asset in making MCC even more student-responsive than it already is."

Pickering’s wife, Erin, is originally from Jacksonville, NC. They have been married for 23 years and have two children. Their son Jacob is a third generation Marine and their daughter Bailie is attending UNCW, working toward dual degrees in Art and Recreational Leisure.

Billboard Campaign Features MCC Success Stories

A series of billboards recently went up in Martin County. Each board featured a different MCC student - April Sutton (pictured right), Danielle Noonan, and Chris Reeves. Sutton, a recent cosmetology graduate, said that she has received hundreds of texts from friends and family congratulating her on her new found fame. These same students were also featured in a series of TV commercials currently being aired on WITN TV and ME TV. MCC’s Director of PR and Institutional Advancement, Judy Jennette said, “No one tells our story than our own students. As soon as I contacted them about being a part of the advertising campaign, they agreed to do it without hesitation. They were excited to share their MCC experience with others. I have heard many positive comments about the ads.” Jennette identified the students through faculty members who recommended them. Jennette is preparing to produce a promotional video this summer. Equine student Jesse Bunting will also be featured on a billboard on highway 64 and in print ads. A billboard will also go up in Windsor.

See more “Faces of MCC” on pg. 10

New MCC promotional items have been purchased! They include a pen, sticky note pad, koozie, key chain, cell phone stand, and a plastic bag to put them in. If you need items for recruitment purposes, please contact Judy Jennette at 252-789-0310.
Tami Thurston, Director of MCC’s Equine Technology program (standing center) is flanked by her students in the MCC horse arena. She and the program were recently featured in The Way To Go magazine, a national equine publication. The students from left to right are; Jessica Bailey, Ariana Blaylock, Kimberly West, Jesse Bunting, Luke Williams, Bailey Foote, Kathleen Williams, Nicole Burkett, Angela Sprull, and Sharon Ragalia.

**MCC Equine Program featured in National NSBA Publication**

The Equestrian Technology program at Martin Community College (MCC) was one of four colleges featured in the January 2015 issue of The Way To Go magazine published by the National Snaffle Bit Association (NSBA). The NSBA is an organization dedicated to promoting and improving the quality of pleasure horses as they relate to exhibits, events, contests, and training.

The article, Courses on Horses, by Connie Lechleitner, featured interviews of four equine education professionals who spoke to the advantages of earning a degree in equine sciences. Those interviewed included: Clark Bradley from the University of Findlay in Ohio; Bill Kaven from North Central Texas College in Gainesville, Texas; Scott Nueman at Rocky Mountain College in Montana; and Tami Thurston, the Equine Technology Director at Martin Community College, in Williamston, NC. Findlay’s enrollment is the largest at nearly 4,900 students, North Central Texas has nearly 2,000 students, and Rocky Mountain serves nearly 1,100 students. MCC is the smallest in the group, with nearly 660 students.

While there are many colleges and universities that offer classes in animal science, relatively few institutions in the United States can be considered equine schools -- schools that offer degrees in equine studies. Equine studies generally covers animal management, genetics and breeding, nutrition and health of horses. Martin Community College is the only community college in North Carolina that offers an equine technology program and degree.

The interviewer asks the experts, why is an equine related education important in the horse training business? Thurston addresses it from a very practical point of view, “You need to be able to speak intelligently with your clients. Everything about your training business needs to be professional, even down to presenting your billing to your clients professionally and in a timely manner. I think there are trainers out there who didn’t take the time to learn the accounting software programs that can make their business more efficient. It’s a small thing but something clients notice.”

Thurston, a graduate of the equine program at Findlay, goes on to use herself as an example. “I got hurt, and decided I didn’t want to train as much, and the opportunity to work at Martin Community College came up. A position like that would have been out of my reach if I had not had a college degree.”

Like North Central Texas College, MCC offers a two-year associate degree in equine technology, a three semester diploma in equine technology, as well as a certificate option which involves only equine science courses. And according to Thurston, “A lot of our students go on and get four year degrees.”

The training tracks at MCC are designed to fit the

*Equine Feature Story Continued on page 5*
Sayra Alexandra Delgadillo Chavirra takes top MCC Honors

MCC’s Distinguished Graduate and Academic Excellence award winner, Sayra Delgadillo Chavirra of Stokes decided to check out MCC upon the recommendation of a friend. She noted that when she visited MCC the staff was extremely friendly and helpful – especially Dr. Brian Busch. She knew right away that MCC was where she needed to start her college career.

Delgadillo-Chavirra, a member MCC’s Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society and treasurer for the Student Government Association, earned an Associate in Arts degree. She plans to transfer her credits from MCC to Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) this fall where she wants to major in biology and minor in chemistry.

“I loved my time at MCC,” said Delgadillo-Chavirra. “The faculty was so supportive and helpful. I wish I could stay and get my bachelor’s degree here.”

In her Academic Excellence essay, she wrote, “In my point of view, MCC is the best community college because it provides students with a lot of personal attention…it allows everyone to get to know everyone. I feel like it is way better to provide quality, not quantity.”

Although Delgadillo-Chavirra admitted that working full time while she attended MCC was challenging, she was able to manage it and make good grades. “Online classes were a big help for me,” she said.

Equine Feature Story continued from Page 4

desired outcome and make the best use of students’ time. Thurston states, “Our equine training track requires four riding classes, while the equine business track only requires one riding class.”

Thurston goes on to say in the article, “Our curriculum is also very hands on, and is student run and operated. We designed it so that students experience all facets of running a stable – from fixing fences, to dragging the arena, in addition to training horses. They learn practical every day skills that will help them manage a breeding farm or operate a training business – from the menial tasks to showing.”

This type of multi-disciplined training provides MCC’s equine students with a firm foundation. “Students learn everything from ground work, to how to break a horse apart, how to put a horse into a frame, build collection, to developing lead changes, and then applying that knowledge to everything from Western Pleasure, Ranch Horse Pleasure, Hunter Under Saddle, to Reining and even Hunters,” stated Thurston.

Thurston also touched on the biggest advantages of MCC’s equine program, its affordability and small class size. “I think our program provides incredible value for our students,” she said. “Our students receive a great education for $1,200 per semester. That is compared to $5,000 per semester or more at a private school. I don’t know where else you can get that kind of value.”

With an average freshman class size of 20 to 30 students, and sophomore classes with 10 to 12 students, MCC students receive lots of personalized attention, Thurston said.

To access the full article, visit The Way To Go magazine website and click on the January 2015 edition. The article starts on page 54.
Pre-School service eliminates barriers for some MCC students

Eight years ago, Martin County Schools and Martin Community College (MCC) joined forces to establish a preschool on the college campus. Although the children who attend the Martin County Schools/Martin Community College Preschool come from all over the county, many MCC students with young children have qualified to enroll their children in this high quality program while they attend college – "a win/win scenario for all concerned", according to Jill Perry, the preschool's lead instructor and 29 year veteran of early childhood education.

"We like to work with MCC students as much as we can and encourage any student, or potential student with a preschooler to apply," adds Perry. "We also have preschools in Hamilton, Jamesville, Williamston and Robersonville."

Applications were solicited through May 22 and were available at any of Martin County's elementary schools and the Martin County Schools Administration building.

The applicants were screened in person June 9-11. Parents whose children are accepted into the program, are notified during the summer, allowing them time to get enrolled in college and begin classes in August.

Since their inception 25 years ago, Martin County preschools have been inclusive – blending children at different developmental levels into one classroom - focused on the social, emotional, intellectual development and physical needs of the children. The NC Department of Health and Services has awarded its highest rating, 5 stars, to all of Martin County's Preschools.

Having a preschool on the MCC campus is mutually beneficial to both organizations according to Elaine Spellman, lead instructor for MCC’s Early Childhood program. Spellman states, “The preschool is a great place for my students to observe and do internships. It is a fantastic learning opportunity. Likewise, college services, like our library and its staff are a great resource for the children. They love their monthly story time with Ms. Caudle.”

MCC Library Director, Mary Anne Caudle, is pictured above reading to the students in the MCS/MCC preschool located on the college campus. This pre-K class of 16 children look forward to their monthly story time with Ms. Caudle.

Elijah Freeman, a staff member in the MCC IT Department, gave a stirring recitation of The Big Timer by Langston Hughes during the LCAC Poetry Slam on April 29.
MCC’s First Poetry Slam is big success

The MCC Literary and Creative Arts Club and the Student Government Association joined forces to sponsor a Poetry Slam on April 29 in the Student Lounge of Building 1 on the MCC campus. Although the event was not a contest, as in the traditional sense of a poetry slam, students enjoyed food and music while their fellow classmates and instructors shared their own poems and favorite works by other poets.

One of the club’s advisors, Rochelle Mabry, Ph.D., stated, “The great thing about the Poetry Slam was that it showed students that poetry isn’t just some dry, stuffy subject to be studied in English class or something only certain people ‘get.’ It’s accessible, it’s alive, and it’s fun. I think that seeing their peers perform their own original works will encourage other students to find their own voices through writing.”

The event was emceed by the LCA club president, Quanté Bazemore. Bazemore is pursuing college transfer credits in psychology and is currently in her second semester at MCC. She read Poe’s Annabelle Lee during the event.

Several presenters; Crestacia Brown, Angela Knox, Jasmine Simpson, Mary Anne Caudle and Rhonda Breed read original pieces. Works from Joyce Kilmer, Psalm 121, Emily Dickinson, Maya Angelou, Edgar Allen Poe, William Carlos Williams, Ruth Forman, and Billy Collins were also read. An exceptional recitation of Langston Hughes’ poem The Big Timer was presented by Elijah Freeman, who works in the MCC IT Department.

MCC student, Jasmine Simpson, wrote and read an original poem titled, I am Ambition and Ambition is Me. Simpson used her poem to express the boundless hopes and dreams of a young college student preparing to take on the world.

I want to give back
To be the cause of acts of kindness
To be a legend
I want people to remember me
Not for telling lies
But for being honest
It’s not a good feeling to be the victim
of broken promises
I am ambition
Ambition is me.

Mary Anne Caudle, MCC’s Library Director, read a poem titled Yin Yang Love written by her husband, Sam Love, and featured in his book Converging Waters. The following excerpt demonstrates how

Love’s poem captures the essence of how opposites attract:

You love people in books
I love people at parties
You balance your checkbook
I hope the bank gets it right

Only the Eastern Yin Yang concept can explain our thirty years together
Yin Yang, an ancient Chinese symbol
of black and white opposites
intertwining to create a unity

According to instructor Marsha Rogers, another of the club’s advisors, “The first MCC Poetry Slam held on April 29 was indeed a successful event. Walt Whitman once said that ‘to have great poets there must be great audiences too.’ Our students, administrators, faculty and staff came together to create a highly engaged audience - one that would make Whitman (the old gray bearded poet) quite proud! The cafeteria was filled with supporters and contributors. Original works, as well as selections from famous and contemporary poets were enjoyed by all.”

The club’s advisors are MCC instructors Rochelle Mabry, Ph.D., Debra Twitchell and Marsha Rogers.
MCC Holds 47th Graduation on May 12

Martin Community College (MCC) conducted its forty-seventh graduation ceremony on Tuesday, May 12 in the Martin County auditorium. Eighty-eight students had degrees, diplomas, or certificates conferred on them at this year’s ceremony. Program awards, Distinguished Graduate, and Academic Excellence awards were also acknowledged at this event.

Dr. Stacey Franklin Jones, Chancellor of Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) was the commencement speaker.

Dr. Busch presented the program awards and recognized the Academic Excellence recipient as well as the Distinguished Graduate. Those receiving program awards were nominated by their advisors based on their grades, demeanor and engagement in the classroom. The Program Award denotes a student’s excellence in a particular MCC program. The graduates receiving Program Awards were as follows: Associate in Arts – Regina Harmon, General Education – Tammy Hoggard Roberson, Automotive Systems Technology – Branden Day, Business Administration – Kristina McKeel, Commercial Refrigeration – Cedric Young, Computer Information Systems – Kevin Meyer, Early Childhood Education – Concetta Dolberry, Electrical Systems Technology – Brody Bland, Equine Training Technology – Haley Beasley, Industrial Systems Technology – Vernon Bland, Medical Assisting – Tiffany McKimmy, and Physical Therapist Assistant – Kendal Street. The Distinguished Graduate and the Academic Excellence award both went to Sayra Alexandra Delgadillo Chavirra of Stokes.

Calvin Moore, Principal of Bertie Early College High School (BECCHS), was on stage to congratulate the ten students graduating from BECHS. Five of the ten BECHS graduates completed high school and earned a two-year Associate in Arts degree in four years.

The Bertie County ECHS graduates who earned their two year college degree ahead of schedule were Alex Joyner, Calen Mitchell, Lauren Dunlow, Sarah Harrison, and Nathan Wright. Joyner and Mitchell are transferring their credits from MCC to UNCG. Dunlow has been awarded a softball scholarship to attend NC A&T. Harrison and Wright are transferring to Campbell and ECU respectively.

Dr. Jennifer Burress, MCC’s Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services then presented the candidates for graduation. As they crossed the stage, President Britt and Ms. Jackie Gillam, Chair of the MCC Trustees, presented each student with their degree, diploma or certificate.

In his closing remarks to the graduates, MCC Trustee, William “Ed” Thompson stated, “I pray that each of you will find success and happiness in what you have achieved through Martin Community College. Congratulations MCC graduates!”
Martin Community College (MCC) celebrated its GED graduation on Monday, May 11, in a ceremony held in the MCC Auditorium. Approximately sixty family, friends, staff and faculty were on hand to cheer on the graduates and congratulate them on their achievement.

Not all of the 100 GED graduates from MCC were able to attend the ceremony. Many of the graduates have obtained jobs or moved away since their successful completion of the program. Eighty-eight of the GED graduates completed their course work and test at the Bertie Correctional Institution (BCI).

This was the 39th GED Graduation Ceremony conducted by MCC. The GED (General Education Development) credential is the equivalent of a High School diploma and is administered at MCC through the Basic Skills department in the Division of Continuing Education.

Retired educator and MCC Director of the Bertie County campus, Norman M. Cherry, was the guest speaker for the event.

Charlotte Griffin, President of the MCC Foundation board, announced the winners of the Foundation scholarships for GED graduates. Shawn Woolard received the Ormand Family Scholarship and Jeremiah Marin, was awarded the Gene and Jean Rogers scholarship. These scholarships were awarded based on essays written by the candidates and will assist them with their tuition and books as they become college students this fall. The Foundation also provided ten other graduates with free tuition for one curriculum class this fall.

Woolard stated in his essay, “It’s been an ambition of mine since I was very young, to be the first person in my family to go to college and graduate with a four year degree.” He plans to attend MCC for two years and then transfer to ECU where he will pursue a degree in business which will allow him to either take over his father’s construction company, or start his own.

Marin noted, “Since coming to Martin County, many people have been kind and helpful to me. They made it possible for me to overcome some daunting obstacles to get to this point and I am very grateful to them. I want to do right by them.” Marin is already enrolled in the Industrial Technology curriculum at MCC and is making great grades. He too, plans to transfer to ECU and earn a four year degree in Industrial Technology.

In January of 2014, the GED was moved to Pearson VUE, a proprietary computer-based testing platform.

According to Jeri Griffin, the Basic Skills Director at MCC, “The recent changes to the GED have made it unattainable for many students. Last year we had 200 graduates – this year we had 100. The GED testing fee has increased from $35.00 to $80.00, plus there is now an additional $24.00 practice test fee which was previously free. Most of our students do not have the money to take the test. It’s a real problem.”

Nonetheless, GED credentials are very important. People with a high school credential earn $568,000 more during their lifetime than those without a high school credential.
Among those graduating, were a mother and son from Jamesville, Saun and Daniel Cooper. Saun received her degree in Physical Therapist Assisting (PTA) while her son Daniel earned a degree in Electrical Systems Technology (EST).

Saun decided to attend MCC after the business she worked for shut its doors. She saw an opportunity to retrain herself for a career that excited her. She was drawn to medicine, but did not want, as she put it, “to be around a lot of gory stuff.” Having been through a lot of physical therapy herself, she felt that MCC’s PTA program would be a good fit for her. Saun Cooper states, “It was a tough program, but I loved it!”

Her son Daniel said that he decided to go into the EST program because both of his grandfathers and one of his uncles had worked in electrical engineering or electrical maintenance all of their lives. He was hesitant at first but after a few classes at MCC, Daniel decided, “he had wires instead of veins in his body, and was meant to do this kind of work.” Daniel reports that he already has a job lined up after graduation.

Saun Cooper also noted that the first time she walked across the stage, she was pregnant with her son Daniel, so this would actually be their second time crossing the stage together. She also mentioned that her daughter Ashley, will graduate from High School in June. “It’s been a whirlwind of activity at the Cooper house this month!”

Mother and Son graduate together - twice

Faces of MCC Ad Campaign

Danielle Noonan (below) transferred to ECU and will be soon be an elementary teacher.

Jesse Bunting (above) is a first year student in the MCC Equestrian Technology program.

April Sutton (above) just graduated but plans to come back this fall to study Early Childhood.

Chris Reeves (below) is transferring from MCC to ECU and plans to become a science teacher.
Several Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) students escaped from their studies to enjoy a warm day and some sunshine to play volleyball. Perhaps the best thing a small college has to offer is the camaraderie and close bonds the students can form with their classmates and faculty members.

Regina Harmon finds new career path at MCC

Regina Harmon, a lifelong resident of Bertie County, was all set to go into law enforcement in 2007. She completed the course work and was on her way to take the certification test when she was hit head on in automobile accident. While recovering, she began to search her soul and wondered if law enforcement was really a good fit for her personality. Although she had always thought law enforcement was the career for her, Harmon stated, “I am a very positive person. I like to build people up – not arrest them. Somehow, law enforcement just did not feel right. I asked God what to do because it has been my experience – if you listen, he will tell you.”

After recovering from her injuries, Harmon went to work for the Bertie County Schools. Through a series of jobs in the school system and part time work at the YMCA in Windsor, Harmon found her answer—social work. She knew that she was happiest when she was working with other people in a positive and supportive atmosphere. Harmon, who along with her husband Keith, had raised and educated three children (all three graduates of NCCU) knew that it was time for her to go back to school and pursue her dream. With a supportive husband behind her, Harmon chose MCC as the place to start.

Not long after starting her studies at MCC, Harmon became a student of Rhonda Breed, MCC’s Psychology and Sociology Instructor. Harmon was immediately impressed with Breed’s attention and support of every student who wanted to succeed. Harmon stated, “I thank degree. God for Ms. Breed every day. She inspired and encouraged me!”

Harmon, who also received MCC’s Associate in Arts Program Award, has already been accepted at ECU and will start attending this summer in pursuit of a degree in social work. Her plan is to keep going until she obtains a masters degree.
MCC work study student, Kayla Quay, designed and decorated the display window in building 2 prior to this year’s graduation. Kayla is in the Early Childhood program.

Golf Tournament Raises Money for MCC Foundation

The MCC Foundation hosted its annual Golf Tournament at the Roanoke Country Club on May 21. More than 100 players joined in the fun event to raise money for the College. Foundation Director Robert Bonner organized the event and was pleased with the community’s support. Pictured left are Freddy Jackson and Kip Sales (putting). Annette Murray in the Print Shop took photos and Debra Hardison in the Bookstore helped keep things flowing smoothly.

Martin Memos

June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 - Monday registration for new students continues
June 4 and 18 - Cafe Cookouts (must buy tickets in advance)
June 25 - Deadline for submitting news for the Martin Messenger
July 2 - MCC closed in observance of Independence Day