A Presidential Note:

I’m Bullish on Beacon

As my tenure winds down, I’ve been reflecting on my time here and casting an eye to the future of the College. I’ll reserve some reflections for the last issue of the Navigator for this academic year, which will come out in May. As I make an effort to forecast the future of the College, I must say I think it is uncommonly bright. This is not a forecast for many small, liberal arts colleges that will suffer from the demographic realities in certain areas of the country. I predict we will see several closures in the years to come. Not so with Beacon College. There are five reasons for my optimism. Here they are:

1. Even though Beacon no longer claims exclusivity in offering accredited baccalaureate coursework, it still occupies a unique niche within the larger higher education community. Competition is likely to increase in the future but steps taken by the Trustees will help to keep Beacon at the vanguard of this work.

2. The College is blessed with a very dedicated faculty, staff, and governing board. The commitment here is akin to a religious calling. In addition to the personal dedication of our folks, there is a rigor to the hiring and selection processes to assure a good match between employee or trustee and the work of the College.

3. The educational model developed over the years at Beacon College has proved successful. What we do works. This is not a hollow claim. Our high retention, graduation, and placement rates confirm that Beacon’s five pillars of support (learning specialists, trained faculty/staff, active counselors, life coaches, and work placement team) are the basis for success.

4. The College is functional. I can assure you that many institutions of higher learning are very sick and dysfunctional places. This is not true here. I’m not suggesting that there aren’t areas where improvement is needed, but all-in-all Beacon is clicking along pretty well.

5. Beacon rests not on its laurels but looks to the future. There is a good deal of creativity and entrepreneurship on this campus, which has accelerated in recent years. Life coaching, peer mentoring, and the summer job transition program are three cases in point. There are many others.

Given all of this, coupled with other reasons I haven’t thought of, I think we all should look to the future with a sense of security and excitement. I make no bones about it; I’m bullish on Beacon.
Peer Mentor Profile: Sean Marley

Contributed by Michele Patestides, Learning Specialist and Alan Flaten, CIS Instructor

Sean Marley has served as a Computer Information Science (CIS) peer mentor since the inception of the program in August 2012. This semester, he is serving in an expanded role as a teaching assistant (TA) for Mr. Alan Flaten’s “Computer Applications” class at the College. As a TA, Sean assists not only Mr. Flaten, but students in the class who may need or request additional help. Mr. Flaten has shared with me recently that he is so confident in Sean’s abilities that he can even leave his class for 10-15 minutes without concern. Under Sean’s guidance, Mr. Flaten’s class is on-track and running efficiently when Mr. Flaten returns to it. Sean is always careful to “help, not hover,” so his students feel comfortable requesting assistance if needed. Sean is graduating this semester with his A.A. degree in CIS. He will be continuing his education at the University of Tampa, where he has been accepted into their film program. There he will be studying film editing, directing, and production, so you might see his name on those movie credits in the future! Sean Marley is a highly respected peer mentor who is known for his steadfast reliability, initiative, and patience. We will miss him and wish him all the best for his future in film!

For Graduation-Related Pictures on May 5:

#beacongrad

Contributed by Gretchen Dreimiller, Content Manager

Beacon College has established an account on Instagram, a popular online photo-sharing social networking site. Our account name is beaconcollegefl. Instagram is available solely as a mobile app, but the account photos can be viewed through any electronic device.

We are excited about graduation and will be including photos from this event on our Instagram account. To have a complete collection, we ask that anyone taking pictures with Instagram at graduation or its related events, please use the hashtag #beacongrad so that they will be categorized appropriately and viewed by others in the College community.

Anyone interested in this site should download the free app for their Android or Apple device. Accounts must be created via a mobile device, though the photos themselves may then be viewed on a desktop.

Twitter users should also use the hashtag #beacongrad for tweets related to graduation. Help us preserve these important memories!
Announcing the 2013 College Catalog Contest!

Contributed by Gretchen Dreimiller, Content Manager and Sandy Novak, Web and Digital Media Instructor

Beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year, Sandy Novak’s Photoshop class began taking on the challenge of creating the cover for the College catalog. In years past, the cover had been simple, plain, and dark blue with the seal prominently featured on it; however, now the covers are diverse, exciting, and creative! Sandy Novak requires each student to produce two very different and unique designs. During the design phase, the students work in class, receiving feedback both from Sandy and from peers. Changes are made based on those suggestions, and designs are polished for the final critique. The College catalog cover is then selected from the finished products. Past winners of this contest include EB Newlon, who deemed it “an honor and a privilege to be selected for the catalog cover.” (Heather Reed’s winning cover is pictured on the left.)

This contest provides a great opportunity for students to experience a real world scenario, one which they will certainly face in the future as digital media professionals. They come to understand the importance of serving their client which, in this case, is Beacon College. Taking on the role of the clients, Dave Brown and Dr. Shelly Chandler visit the classroom, giving students an understanding of what they want and allowing an opportunity for questions. Sandy Novak provides the class with an overview of acceptable use of content and pictures, ensuring that students are cognizant of copyright laws throughout the process. The class is also taught about the technical aspects of a printing job, and they even take a field trip to Ford Press so they can actually see the printing presses at work. Once they are clear on the guidelines from the client and the printer, each student has the freedom and flexibility to create something they believe will meet the needs of the client and achieve the goals of the project. Rebecca Rasmussen, who is the TA for this semester’s Photoshop class, called it a “good hands-on experience for us to pick a cover that future students will see and then pick classes out of.”

When all the cover designs are polished, they are submitted to the President’s Council for evaluation. In the past, the entire selection process was completed through this committee. This year, the Beacon College community will be invited to participate in the selection process and vote for the winning cover. Because the class completes a total of 24 options, the President’s Council will complete the initial selection process, narrowing the field to three or four finalists. At that point, everyone within the College can choose his/her favorite!

The cover catalog contest will take place online, most likely via the main Beacon College Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/beaconcollege.edu). Once the dates are set, an announcement of the contest will be sent via email and through social media outlets, so stay tuned for the latest developments. Be a part of Beacon College history by helping to select the cover for the 2013-14 catalog!
Special Assistant to the Mathematics Program  

Contributed by Lucretia Gabriel, Mathematics Instructor  

Mathematics at Beacon College is a very young program; this will be only the second year that the math program has had a full-time instructor. Prior to that, the mathematics program was limited to one course that was taught by a different adjunct instructor each semester. As the creator of the mathematics program and its sole instructor, I taught classes and worked individually with students in the Math Lab. This schedule left me little time for meeting other responsibilities as an instructor. On many days, I wished I could have cloned myself! Fortunately, Dr. Shelly Chandler, who was aware of the situation talked it over with her husband, and as the saying goes, “the rest is history.”  

On March 27th, I received a wonderful birthday present. Dr. Kevin Chandler came to the Beacon College mathematics program to volunteer his time, knowledge, skills, and talents. Dr. Chandler is an engineer with over six years of teaching experience at the university level, having taught both undergraduate and graduate students. Since that day in March, he has logged over 40 hours each week as a volunteer assisting the students in classes and in the Math Lab. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, he comes to volunteer later so that he can help students in the Math Lab until 7 PM in the evening. What a difference his presence and help has made in my life and the lives of the students! With help from him and the Peer Mentors, I have more time to meet my responsibilities as an instructor; the students don’t have to wait as long to get help with math.  

Thank you, Dr. Shelly Chandler, for courageously asking if I would be open to having some help. Thank you, Dr. Kevin Chandler for all the hours of assistance and support you have provided and continue to provide in this effort. It is a pleasure and a privilege working with you.  

News from the Writing Center  

Contributed by the Writing Center Staff  

As the 2012-13 academic year draws to a close, the Writing Center would like to extend its gratitude to the Beacon College community for having helped make this a fantastic year. Because of you, we were able to make a smooth transition into our new physical location, implement Writing Center workshops relevant to your classes, engage students in evening critical thinking, word-based activities, and so much more.  

This year, the Writing Center staff presented at four national conferences, created 11 Writing Center workshops, acquired four new computers, made one Shakespeare scarecrow, and served over 10,000 student visits to the Writing Center!  

We look forward to accommodating your needs in the upcoming Summer session! During Summer Session, the Writing Center will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you!
Casino Night at Beacon College

On April 5th, Beacon College traveled back in time to the bygone days of glitz, glamour, gangsters, and gambling during Casino Night. The event kicked off at 7 PM with everyone decked out in their best mobster clothes and formal wear. Beacon College went all out for the event with food catered by Vic’s Embers, a cash bar, a DJ, and several prizes. Even though the look of the night was very retro, the music was contemporary. The DJ played nothing but the hits so there was plenty of dancing throughout the night! However, Casino Night would not be Casino Night without games like Poker, Craps, Roulette, and Blackjack—all for funny money of course. At the end of the night, there were several legendary prizes given out during the raffle portion. Overall, the event was a huge success! We look forward to another fun Casino Night next year!

The Beacon Honor Code and SGA Activities

On April 2nd and 3rd, the Student Government Association hosted Mr. Rich McWilliams, a retired Associate Professor from Thomas University, who shared his experience in developing his school’s first Honor Code along with insights on why creating one at Beacon College is so meaningful. During his time on campus, Mr. McWilliams led four dialogue sessions which were open to all students, faculty, and staff who were interested in gaining awareness of the process. These sessions served as first steps in the student driven initiative to write and develop our own Honor Code. Now with advice from Mr. McWilliams and support from the departmental chairs, Hannah Walk (senior) has begun the paramount challenge of leading this endeavor. While they are still in the beginning stages of what will surely be a meticulous process, this is an important stride in making Beacon even better than it is today. Thanks to all members of the SGA for their motivation and for their contributions to the up and coming Honor Code!

Every year, the Academy of Florida Independent Colleges and Universities (AFICU) holds a conference where college Student Government Associations go to participate in workshops, lectures, and discussions. While there, they brainstorm ideas relevant to various topics that will help make an impact on their campuses. This year, on April 5-7, the conference was hosted by Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, and Beacon College was represented by SGA officers Brett Daly, Shaheed Nu’Man, and Heather Reed. They described the weekend as a wonderful experience and brought back with them valuable knowledge that will help the Beacon College SGA with their approach to students, administration, and community.
Liza Rodahl came to Beacon College because she knew she needed the small setting that Beacon had to offer. Here, she has found much more than a little extra help in the classroom—for Liza, Beacon has been a place of self-discovery and acceptance.

Finishing her Resident Assistant career of two years, Liza brought a unique perspective and personality to the team. When applying for the position, Liza said she wanted to help her peers navigate experiences similar to those she faced.

Liza’s dream job is to serve as a celebrity dance instructor for music videos,... but if that doesn’t pan out, she aspires to work with elementary age children after graduating this May with her BA in Human Services.
On Friday, April 19th, the Center for Student Success hosted an end of year celebration to thank and recognize the peer mentors for a banner first year. We also celebrated some birthdays and a good time was had by all!

[Pictured below: Front Row-left to right: Mikey Tabankin, Katie McNamara (blue shirt), Allison Lau, Peyton Forster, Ali Minirth, Jennie Friedman, Tyler Kornmehl, and Lucretia Gabriel; Back Row-left to right: Caroline Le, Braden Walter, Mel Elmonus (orange polka dress), Cari Beecham, Michelle Underwood, Dr. Kirk Stowe, Sean Marley, Matt Pagano, Nate Judge, and Michele Patestides. Not pictured Peer TA’s/Peer Mentors: Brett Daly, Lindsay Doloboff, Courtney Greene, Jessica Parola, Adam Simpson, Kevin Trousdale, Hannah Walk, and Kristen Wurz.]
As Transition Coach/Career Development Instructor, I have been working with Alexander “Alex” Blankenship since the fall of 2011. Alex graduated from Beacon College in December of 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in Computer Information Systems. Since that time, despite being a very hard worker and having dedicated a great deal of time and energy to his job search, he struggled to find full-time employment near his home in Tampa, Florida.

Once we began working together on networking strategies, resume building, and interviewing skills, Alex put these into practice almost immediately. He began creating a network of business contacts through his church, personal friends, family, and employment agencies. Additionally, he sought services through his local Vocational Rehabilitation office in Tampa. In December of 2011, he was hired as a part-time sales associate at Aéropostale. However, the position was seasonal, so he was forced to continue his job search.

As we continued to work on interviewing skills and job search strategies, I sent Alex advertisements for posted IT and administrative assistant positions, whenever possible. He attended job fairs and remained in close contact with me and other Beacon College staff, making trips to our campus and calling and emailing to ask questions in an effort to learn as much as possible about the job market and resume tips. He also sought guidance on how to improve his job search and interviewing skills.

In January of 2013, Alex applied for an IT position at Computer Generation Solutions, a call center providing problem resolution services for customers who have purchased AOL products and services. Within only a few days, he was contacted for an interview the next day. He was hired on the spot and began working the following week on January 23, 2013. Alex’s official title is IT Technician. He received one week of training and has obtained LD accommodations from his employer to be more successful on the job. Though Alex sees himself doing much “bigger” things when he envisions the future of his career, he is very pleased to have such this opportunity as a stepping stone in the field of IT.

When asked what Alex enjoys most about his job he says, “I really like the feeling I get from helping people.” I cannot say enough about Alex’s willingness to put into practice every ounce of advice and guidance that was shared with him throughout this process. He attentively listened and made any changes recommended to him. I believe that it was this inclination that ultimately prepared him for this opportunity and allowed him to become successful in obtaining his current position, and it is this readiness that will ensure his successful future in IT.
This month’s featured social media site - LinkedIn!

Contributed by Gretchen Dreinnick, Content Manager

LinkedIn is the principal professional networking site. Even for those of you reluctant to use social media, LinkedIn is worth considering. Whether wanted or not, we all have an online presence. Having a strong profile on LinkedIn helps you control the branding of your name and professional image. It becomes one of the top search results for your name when using Google, making it a powerful resource for determining your branding. Hopefully, only the upcoming graduates are looking for a job, but it’s beneficial to have a profile on this site whether you are actively seeking employment or not, so that you have all your contacts in one place should your circumstances change at some point. While it is a great opportunity for you to present yourself professionally, there are also lots of groups that could be helpful for your professional development and networking. Fortunately, this is one social media site that requires very limited time commitment. Once you establish your profile, you only have to login occasionally for updates, accept invitations, respond to messages, etc. Of course, if you join any groups, you can jump into the discussions whenever you feel moved to do so, and you can post updates on important professional events (such as attending a conference or publishing a paper), providing a very productive environment where you may spend your time!

The fastest growing groups of members on LinkedIn are students and recent graduates. It is for this reason that we have established a Beacon College Alumni Group. This is obviously intended for alumni, but it is also for seniors preparing to graduate, as well as for faculty and staff. The main reasons for having such a group are: 1) to introduce students to this valuable resource for their professional lives; 2) to give students and alumni access to important College contacts in one place; 3) to pass on potential job leads; and 4) to provide a setting for discussions centered around professional lives. Alumni will be able to stay in contact with their peers and current members of the College community.

If you have not already done so, I highly suggest joining LinkedIn today! If you do decide to create a profile on LinkedIn (or if you already have one), please consider joining our Beacon College Alumni Group. It is a great way to show that we care about our students and their success, especially after graduation. This month, the featured discussion will revolve around advice for our upcoming graduates. The students all appreciate guidance, especially when they are undergoing such a major change in their lives. Please contribute your own advice, and join in the discussion!

Link to College’s Page: http://tinyurl.com/c6t8lvc
Link to Our Alumni Group: http://tinyurl.com/cptjeq3

Tips:
1) Complete profile;
2) Stay professional;
3) Include a picture;
4) Join groups, especially alumni ones; and
5) Cater URL to name.

For an overview of the site, check out my tutorial!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrqu1sLYZz8
Supporting Holistic Learning and Development

Contributed by Rob Rogers, M.A., Director of Student Services

From April 15th through the 19th, Beacon College and the Department of Student Services hosted four students from the Masters in Occupational Therapy (MOT) program at Adventist University (formerly Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences) in Orlando. One of their program requirements includes fieldwork in an educational environment. The MOT team worked alongside the Beacon College community in identifying areas that support holistic learning and development for all. By the end of the week, the MOT team had created a resource manual for student activities and proposed a transitional curriculum for students diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome and autism spectrum disorder. Much thanks to Nancy Berger, Toni Johnson, and Megan Van Lew for their support and collaboration with this wonderful opportunity to partner with Adventist University.

Meet Janet Spikes

The newest smiling face you’ll see now on campus is the Receptionist at the main desk in the lobby of Beacon Hall; Janet Spikes has joined Beacon College as an Administrative Assistant for the Business Office!

Janet holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Liberal Studies with a Business Minor from the University of Central Florida. Her background includes real estate, sales, administration, and supervisory roles. Janet’s most recent position at the Children’s Home Society of Florida involved directing Support Workers in providing individuals and families with the proper tools, education, and assistance they needed with the goal of protecting and healing children, building and strengthening families, and rescuing and embracing teens who were on their own. In her spare time, Janet enjoys traveling, spending time with friends and family, and getting healthy. Janet’s experience and warm, friendly disposition will be an asset to both the campus community and its visitors. Welcome Janet!
JOIN US AT THE SHIMMER GALA

Beacon College’s premier fund-raising and friend-raising event, the 5th Annual Shimmer Gala, will be held on Friday, May 10th at 6 PM at the Mission Inn. This event brings 300 of Beacon College’s closest friends together for an evening of socializing, fine food, entertainment and excitement! The highlight of the evening will be Dueling Grand Pianos similar to the popular Howling at the Moon night clubs.

Please contact Danie Reese at dreese@beaconcollege.edu to reserve your tickets. If you are interested in sponsoring the Gala, or if you have a silent or live auction item to donate we would love to hear from you. As Sgt. Pepper once said, “a good time is guaranteed for all!”

President’s Council Award Winner

Nancy Berger received the President’s Council Award for the month of March (pictured here with President John Hutchinson). With her vision for a unique Writing Center that would effectively assist students with learning disabilities, Nancy’s direction for the Center has been to help all students develop their critical thinking skills. This has been accomplished by focusing on a student-centered, process-driven model for successful completion of college-level writing. Each year the transformational impact of the Writing Center increases as evidenced by the 1328 student visits, who worked 819 hours on their writing, last month alone!

Nancy put in a tremendous amount of time and effort getting the new Writing Center up and running in its new location. She equipped the Center with assistive technology, a qualified friendly staff, and a great working environment by listening to the needs of faculty and students in how to best fulfill the need on campus for an effective and efficient Writing Center.

The Writing Center also offers students creative opportunities to explore critical thinking in their writing. For example, The Beacon College Chronicle is a student-generated newspaper produced there. Other activities aimed at student development include the Free Thinkers Society (which meets weekly for open discussion and debate on various student-selected topics), Game Night, and educational workshops.

Nancy is a very hard worker who never backs away from a challenge. Many of Beacon’s students have dysgraphia and/or other learning disabilities that make writing difficult while others have a fear of writing; Nancy helps remove that fear. She works diligently and tirelessly with these students. Besides her work in the Writing Center, Nancy teaches four three credit hour classes each semester and frequently presents at National Writing Conferences representing Beacon College. This academic year she took the Writing Center’s peer mentors to Chicago to present there.

We’re sure to see many more innovative and exciting programs and services coming from the Beacon College Writing Center in the years to come! Congratulations Nancy on a fantastic job!
Health and Wellness Corner

Easier Tips to Eat Healthier: Fiber
Contributed by Steven McDaniel, Assistant Director of Life Coaching

It is a good idea to eat plenty of fiber daily! A minimum guideline is 25 grams for women and 38 grams for men. Fiber provides various health benefits such as lowering cholesterol, reducing blood pressure and risks for heart failure, and improving hunger control for weight loss. Luckily, eating fiber means little to no calories as it passes straight through the body. Aim for naturally occurring fiber in things such as whole grains, fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and beans. Beans, chickpeas, and lentils are an easy way to get in your fiber since they contain easily eight grams of fiber per serving, which is a big chunk of your recommended daily intake. You can eaten them alone or add them to soups, stews, or meals of all types. Just remember to increase fiber intake slowly and drink plenty of water, or you’ll wish you had done so. Good Luck!

The Latest News from Human Resources
Contributed by Kim Baggett, Associate Vice President of Human Resources

Greetings from your HR Department. Our Health and Wellness Contest is still going strong. Dr. Shelly Chandler was the winner of our first gift certificate based on taking the lead in the contest. Congratulations Dr. Chandler! Let’s see if anyone can catch up to her based on our points system. There will be another giveaway before the end of the Spring Semester.

Our end of the year party will be May 31st from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the Student Services Building. There will be karaoke and BBQ, beer, wine, and soft drinks catered by Vic’s Embers. We hope you will all take some time to relax and enjoy some fun as the Spring Semester comes to a close.

The results of our Health and Wellness Fair have arrived and we now have some new goals for health and wellness for next year. Some of our initiatives for 2013-2014 are:

- Diversify the exercise program to offer low impact workouts;
- Partner with Better You From Blue to offer lunch and learn workshops on nutrition, exercise, diet, and stress management;
- Increase awareness of free wellness benefits and promote attendance at the Health and Wellness Fair; and
- Initiate a walking campaign on campus.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Human Resource Office if you have any questions or ideas for next year. Thank you to everyone who made this year’s fair a great success!
Students, faculty, and staff join together to learn an ancient form of body movement capable of simultaneously improving focus, relaxing the mind, and strengthening coordination and balance. Recent research shows that Tai chi is a beneficial practice that can bolster the immune system and dramatically reduce stress. The 24 posture simplified form of Tai chi chuan is being taught each Thursday in the Student Center from 12:15 – 12:45 p.m.

Sometimes called the Beijing form for its place of origin, the short version of Yang style Tai chi is easy to learn and can be modified as needed for those with physical injuries or limitations. Chi (pronounced CHEE) is the Chinese word for life force, that intangible substance within us which creates and maintains life. Tai (TIE) is the particular type of movement of this energy within the body. This type of Tai chi was the result of an effort by the Chinese Sports Committee in 1956, who sought to create a simplified form for the masses. Prior to that, Tai chi was taught from family to family and person to person, from five different lineages and styles which began over 2,000 years ago. Altogether there are over 100 possible movements and positions with varying intensity.

I was introduced to this particular form over five years ago, and I attended weekly classes for several years before realizing that this practice could possibly benefit students at Beacon College. Studying daily with my teacher for over an hour, five times a week for six weeks, enabled me to learn it and bring it to Beacon. I have found it to be a powerful remedy for stress; doing the form regularly has made me calmer and more productive.

About five years ago, I taught it to a group of six to eight students, most of whom had martial arts experience. This past semester, we decided in Student Services to offer a lunchtime group and to also invite faculty and staff. Weekly attendance in the group averages 8-12 participants. I so enjoy watching the transformation each week as together each person becomes more graceful and coordinated. I see them smiling, moving in unison with each other, creating a level of peace that is difficult to develop as easily, quickly, or deeply in another way. As one member of the group, Susan Ward, said to me once, grinning: “Let’s get our chi on!”

We are on track to learn and complete the entire 24 movements by the end of summer school. Please feel welcome to come and join in or just watch! We are in the Student Services building every Thursday and will continue through the May term. Discover just how beneficial this practice can be for you!

Bob’s Joke Corner

“A healthy dose of humor from the Doctor”

Contributed by Dr. Bob Bridgeman, VP for Student Services

What do you call a parking lot full of tractors at a McDonald’s in Iowa?

Prom!

“At Beacon College, we like to end on a positive note!”