

WTC News

WESTERN TEXAS COLLEGE

happenings

in p u s

September 1
Dusters @ Seminole, OK

September 4
Movie Night, Student Center
SGA Meeting
12:30, Faculty Lounge

September 5
Foundation Board Meeting
6-8pm, Faculty Dining Room

September 7
Westerners vs Vernon
1pm, Moffet Field

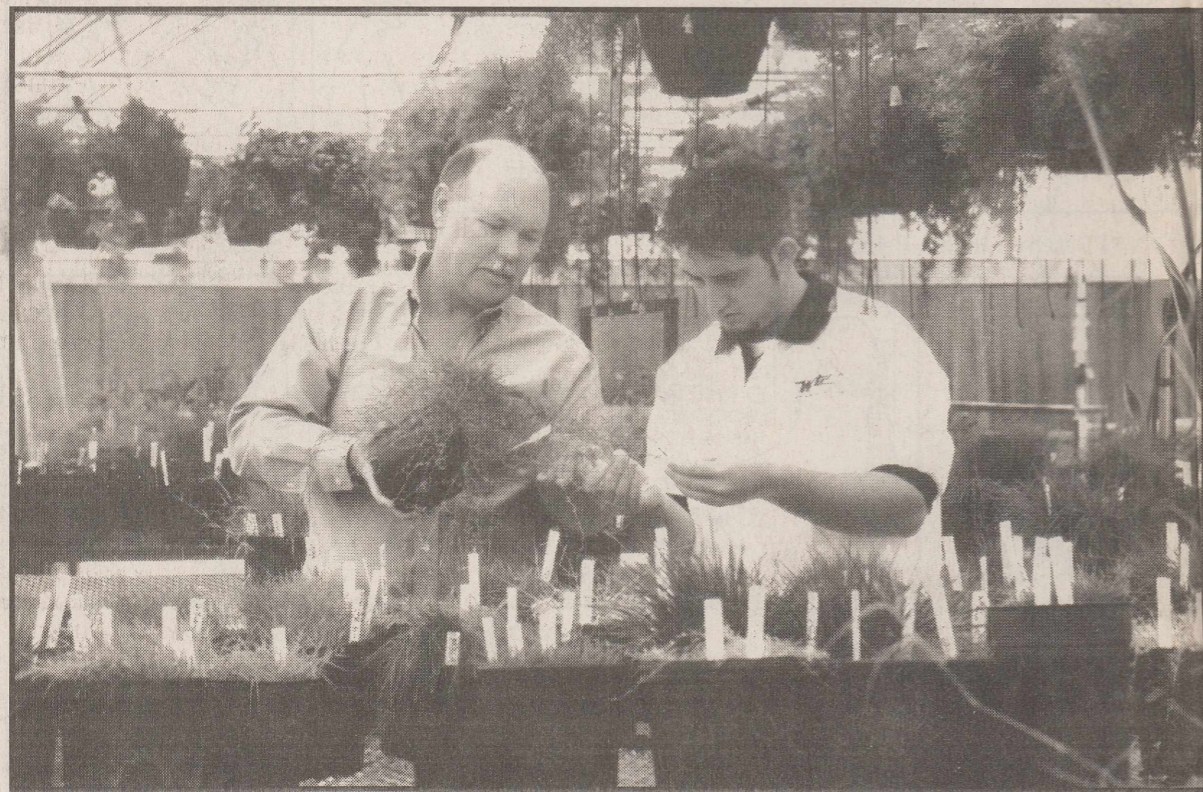
September 12-14
WTC Rodeo Teams @ NMJC
Lovington, NM

September 16
Board Meeting
7pm, Boardroom

Weekend, Aug. 31-Sept. 1, 2002

Western Texas College, 6200 College Ave. Snyder, TX 79549

GLT Program Offers Training for a Variety of Careers



GLT instructor, Sam Fare, works student, Ryan Branch, in the Greenhouse. (WTC photo)

By Helen Fare

It would be hard to hit a golf ball on a course in the Southwestern United States and not come in contact with a graduate of the Golf and Landscape Technology program of Western Texas College. Whether they be a superintendents, assistants, grounds keepers, landscapers, or the guys on the mowers, WTC is proud of its contribution to the green industry in the form of well-trained and prepared students ready for employment.

The GLT program at WTC has been in place since 1972. Sam Fare came to WTC as an instructor in 1998, and Randy Weaver, a GLT graduate, joined the staff in 1999 and serves in the combined capacities of Golf Course Superintendent of the nine hole golf course on campus and instructor of Turfgrass Science, Landscape Management, Surveying, and Applied Agricultural Chemicals. Fare, who has a BS degree in Landscape Architecture from Texas Tech University and extensive experience in landscaping and irrigation, explained his commitment to the program. "I was motivated to take this job because in all my years in the landscape business the hardest job by far was finding qualified people to hire. Too many times I had to hire inexperienced workers and try to give them some horticultural training on the job. At WTC, I feel like I am able to give something back to my profession by providing training and guidance to the students who will be tomorrow's professionals."

Fare teaches Horticulture, Woody Plants, Basic Irrigation, Large Turf Irrigation, Herbaceous Plants, Landscape Construction, and Landscape Design. Two other instructors in the program, Jim Judah and Troy Lilly, teach Soils, Entomology, and Chemistry. The students in the GLT program are required to serve an internship after their first year, and must take the initiative to arrange for placement at the top golf courses in the country. Fare encourages students to go as far afield as possible.

GLT students receive a fundamental background in plant science, turf management, irrigation, and landscape operations. In addition to classroom time, each of the classes also has a hands-on lab where students get involved in real-life activities. The College has two greenhouses where the students propagate plants and grow a crop of bedding plants each semester. They spend some of their lab time setting out these plants around the campus and golf course and also have a plant sale to raise funds for the program.

Weaver incorporates golf-related activities into his labs. He teaches how to properly change the cup on a green, which is not as easy as you might think. He also explains the reasons behind the activities and how they can affect golfers' games. His students get real-time experience with mowing equipment and other golf-related jobs. Important tasks on the golf course, like overseeding, topdressing, and aerating, always get worked into a lab. Having a golf course on campus makes it easier for both instructors to teach the students how to apply classroom knowledge before going into the job market.

The college has a distinct advantage in that many companies provide the latest equipment for the students to practice on. As Weaver points out that it would be impossible for the college to buy all of the tools needed to keep up with the changes. But companies such as Rainbird, John Deere, Toro, Stihl, AMC Industries, and others drop off equipment for a short time for the students to use and get acquainted with.

As both instructor and golf course superintendent, Weaver is able to give students in the program closer contact with the course. "They have been involved with building a Short Game practice facility on the course for junior golf this year," says Weaver. "The new green is sprigged with one of the newest releases of Bermuda grass and will give them a chance to learn what it takes to maintain it."

Trevor Thompson is a student of the GLT program and also works as Weaver's assistant on the golf course. He feels that having a golf course on campus has been invaluable. "We can go from the classroom to the course and apply what we have learned. When I work with Randy, he shows me how things are done,



Students working in the greenhouse on campus. Left to right: Lance Smith, John Roe, Donald Crenshaw, Justin Cheney, Logan Knapp, Justin Jones, and John Dorsey. (WTC photo)

allows me to make mistakes, and then shows me how to correct them."

He believes that this program is like anything else in life. "You get out of it what you put into it." Thompson has received enough scholarships from organizations within the green industry to pay for the majority of his education. He is now looking forward to putting his knowledge into practice as an assistant superintendent.

Weaver also teaches the Applied Ag Chemicals course, which prepares students for sprayer calibration, pesticide selection and usage, and safety. At the end of the spring semester the Texas Department of Agriculture comes and administers the Pesticide Applicator's exam to the students, who are then able to leave the college with a valuable license under their belt.

Although the program has a strong niche in golf course management, the education students receive at WTC opens doors to them in landscape contracting, maintenance, irrigation, sports turf, parks and recreation, and sales, to name a few avenues of opportunity. "A large number of our graduates work in the golf industry, usually starting as a spray tech, irrigation tech, or assistant superintendent. Some move up the career ladder quite rapidly to superintendent, while others take more time to mature and grow into the job. It is almost impossible to go to a meeting of golf course superintendents in the southwest without running into a WTC grad!" he added.

One such graduate is Derwin Price, who is the Superintendent at the Fairway Oaks Golf Course in Abilene, Texas. He returned to the college recently to act as guest speaker for a meeting of the student chapter of the GCSAA. Speaking from experience, he tells students: "Be very selective when choosing your first job, because it is the most crucial one. All future jobs will hinge on how well you perform. School serves as a base of knowledge to build on so apply yourselves and learn as much as you can while you are here because when you go to that first course, you are starting another part of your education and you will add to it everyday."

Graduation from WTC does not have to be the end of a student's education. Several graduates go on to earn four year degrees in Horticulture or Turf Science. Another exciting option for the graduates is to pursue a Bachelor of Applied Science degree, where they get credit for their hours at WTC and can readily finish the requirement for the advanced degree.

The one-year Golf and Grounds Equipment Technician certificate program prepares students for a career in small-engine mechanics. Fare said, "The Green Industry has a drastic shortage of trained mechanics and we hope to be able to provide some qualified workers in the near future. Our curriculum is based on Outdoor Power Equipment Council (OPE) guidelines, which allows graduates not only to have a certificate from WTC but also to get a certification from OPE. Once again, we can open career doors for students with the foresight to enroll in this one-year program."

Students with a golf course career in mind can join the WTC chapter of the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America (GCSAA). Membership gives participants the opportunity to learn leadership and communication skills and develop valuable friendships.

Another campus organization is the student chapter of the American Landscape Contractors Association (ALCA). A trip to the annual ALCA Student Career Day's event is the goal of these students. The event gives GLT students the opportunity to compare their skills with those from other schools, as well as to meet and network with many major landscape firms from across the nation.

WTC president, Dr. Greg Williams summed it all up by saying, "Golf is a very popular sport now and as our population ages it will be more so and will create a demand for people qualified to work in the industry. We intend to continue to fill that need through our Golf and Landscape Technology program here at WTC."



Show your Support for Western Texas College Athletics

Fall 2002 Lady Duster Softball Schedule

August		
30 th Seminole Tournament	Seminole, OK.	TBA
31 st Seminole Tournament	Seminole, OK.	TBA
September		
1 st Seminole Tournament	Seminole, OK.	TBA
14 th TWU Pioneer Classic	Denton, TX.	TBA
17 th Ranger Junior College	Ranger, TX.	12 pm
21 st Angelo State Tournament	San Angelo, TX.	TBA
28 th UTA Round Robin	Fort Worth, TX.	TBA
October		
5 th Texas Tech Tournament	Lubbock, TX.	TBA

Fall 2002 Rodeo Schedule Southwest Region- NIRA

September		
New Mexico Junior College	Lovington, NM	Sept. 12-14
Eastern New Mexico University	Portales, NM	Sept. 19-21
October		
Sul Ross State University	Alpine, TX	Oct. 3-5
Vernon Regional Junior College	Vernon, TX	Oct. 10-12
Texas Tech University	Lubbock, TX	Oct. 24-26

Fall 2002 Westerner Baseball Schedule

August			
24	Moriarty Select Team	Snyder, TX	1:00
31	New Mexico Military	LCU - Lubbock, TX	2:00
September			
3	Midland JC	Midland, TX	2:30
6	Odessa College	Odessa, TX	2:00
7	Vernon JC	Snyder, TX	1:00
10	McMurry University	McMurry - Abilene, TX	3:00
13	Howard JC	Snyder, TX	2:00
20	HSU	Snyder, TX	2:00
27	Midland JC	Snyder, TX	3:00
October			
1	Weatherford	HSU - Abilene, TX	1:00
5-6	Fall Tourney - Lubbock	TX Tech - LCU	TBA
10	Abilene Christian University	ACU - Abilene, TX	2:30
11	Howard JC	Big Spring, TX	1:00
18	New Mexico JC	Hobbs, NM	2:00
22	Weatherford	HSU - Abilene, TX	2:00
25	Odessa JC	Snyder, TX	1:00
26	New Mexico JC	Snyder, TX	1:00
November			
1	Frank Phillips	Snyder, TX	2:00
2	New Mexico Military	LCU - Lubbock, TX	1:00