March AWEstar Melissa Colón

It is a pleasure and great honor that I have been chosen AWEstar for March. I have been teaching at Columbia College since 2001, beginning in the Computer Science Department, transitioning into the full time Distance Education Coordinator position in 2008 when the Columbia was awarded the Title III grant.

My early teaching experience began with teaching pre-school; on to high school and then my dream come true, being able to teach at a community college. I believe that I have the best teaching position here on the campus, working with the faculty, staff and students in regards to online development, instructional technology and multimedia.

There are many wonderful aspects to my involvement in the AWE Committee and assisting with the visibility of AWE and Distance Education basic skills. The AWE committee began as a nurturing, college family and community seeking the best for students regarding preparation for college academics and campus life. There are so many aspects of campus and academic life that are seeded and brought to fruition with the supporters and participants on the committee. We have something very special here at Columbia and preserving academic wellness is very important to me.

Again, I feel honored to be recognized as part of this awesome committee made up of faculty, staff and students working toward a common goal of a healthy campus.

AWEstar Tutor’s Corner with Sierra Hampton

I started attending Columbia College in Spring 2009 as a high school senior. However, it was just last semester that I really got involved in campus activities and now I can’t imagine going back. I’ve always truly enjoyed interaction with all the wonderful professors I’ve had at Columbia, but now I am really discovering Columbia’s capacity for harboring magnificent students as well.

I started working as a tutor in the Academic Achievement Center last semester and through that employment I was exposed to new opportunities and encouraged to get involved in various campus activities, including joining the Student Senate as a senator. My experience at the AAC and as a senator has been invaluable and I vehemently encourage others to explore these opportunities. Through them, I’ve come to know a plethora of genuinely beautiful people who are driven to succeed, who aggressively pursue their education, and who constantly encourage and assist others in doing the same. I’m referring not only to...
the incredible tutors at the AAC or my fellow senate members, but also the students who have taken advantage of the services offered by these programs, who have chosen to engage in the educational opportunities that Columbia promotes, and those who avidly display curiosity, determination, and integrity in their educational career. This driving will to succeed and to do so through cooperation and encouragement rather than competition is something I contend as one of the most valuable traits of Columbia, and it is fostered by faculty and students alike.

I will be graduating in April and transferring to a university to pursue an education abroad, which I am ecstatic about. However, I will sorely miss the incredible teachers who inspired me to fall in love with meaningful education. My professors at Columbia have had a profound impact on my educational goals, as well as the shaping of who I am today. I hope the professors here never underestimate or take for granted their ability to inspire and change lives by investing in their students. Showing that they believe in the success of students and providing the attention to make the student feel that they and their goals are important, is part of what defines Columbia as a great school and has provided me and many others with the inspiration to always strive for actualization of goals and self.

**Health & Wellness Fair**

Laureen Campana and Kim Zubek the inspiration and two of the main coordinators of 2 days of Health & Wellness were glowing as they walked around participating and overseeing the events and activities.

On Tuesday, March 20th and Wednesday, March 21st, the Academic Wellness Educators & several other generous supporters sponsored a health and wellness extravaganza in the Manzanita Building. The 6 dimensions of wellness represented, were Occupational, Physical, Social, Intellectual, Spiritual, and Emotional paths.

Each dimension offered direction on a path of personal wellness. There were events such as watercolor painting, mind expansive games, career exploration, massages, zero balancing, tea time, hip hoppity races, a labyrinth and herbal walks.

Students, Faculty and Staff enjoyed two days between the hours of 10:00-2:00 sipping tea, painting, chatting, participating in wellness dimensions of their choice, letting stress out and wellness in.

Taken from Bill Hettler MD, Six Dimensions of Wellness: http://www.nationalwellness.org

**Quality Matters**

The Distance Education Committee has been working this school year on a “Quality Matters” rubric based on the 7 principles of effective teaching and best practices for online teaching and learning. The rubric is meant to help faculty as they develop online content, perform a self-evaluation and peer support. The rubric tool is an offshoot from an already developed “Quality Matters” rubric using 7 Good Practices and tying the principles with our formal evaluation tool. This revised tool was distributed at the workshop to be used informally in online course development.

On Friday, March 30th, from 11:00-1:00 several of the instructors who are on the Distance Education Committee presented to their fellow colleagues the features of Blackboard that have proven successful. The presentations included hands on practice, and useful tools to streamline and enhance Blackboard usage. Everyone who attended was enrolled in a Blackboard course shell ahead of time filled with activities to follow along with, information and tutorials as a resource to refer back to.

The lively presentations included using a collaborative wiki to tell a story, audio responses, PeerMark assignments, online community building and student’s recommendations to online instructors.