President Pays: 1st Year of College Free For Student

Dr. Howard followed through on a promise he made in front of a packed house at Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown, to pay the first year of tuition for a deserving student. That promise came after the heralded announcement of The Texas State University System’s 25 percent tuition cut. Nearly a month later, Felipe Juarez, an ecstatic LIT HVAC student, accepted his “1st Year Free on the President” with a smile on his face at a fitting venue, the new Eagles’ Nest for Student Success.

Juarez is a Beaumont native, a first generation college student and Beaumont United High School graduate who was dual-enrolled in HVAC at LIT.

Dr. Howard said, “Felipe is so committed to his education that he is taking a full course load of 14 hours. I am proud to present this check and personally cover (his) first year of college.”

Foundation’s Salute A Memorable Event

Hundreds came to honor our first responders and military personnel at the Foundation's 19th annual “A Salute to the Real American Heroes” event on September 5 at Wesley United Methodist Church. Officers from the Santa Fe Police Department spoke, while Vidor Police Chief Rod Carroll and Dr. Howard announced LIT’s Regional Fire Academy is now officially the “Chief C.A. ‘Pete’ Shelton Fire Academy” in honor of the former Beaumont fire chief, who served in governmental offices and was instrumental in helping establish the Salute event.

Beaumont Fire and Rescue Department Color Guard raises flags.
LIT Offers Preview of New Student Success Building

Dr. Angela Hill gives overview of new Eagles’ Nest.

LIT recently showcased its newest campus addition, the $6.1 million Eagles’ Nest for Student Success (Eagles’ Nest) building. The Institute also offered a sneak peek for members of the media on the first day of the fall semester. “The goal was to create a larger space and one-stop-shop to accommodate more students,” Dean of Student Success Dr. Angela Hill said.

The Eagles’ Nest, located behind the Cecil Beeson Building, houses the Student Success and Online Learning departments, Admissions, Advising, Career Services, Financial Aid, Student Activities, Student Government Association, Teaching and Learning Center, an adjunct faculty suite, the Testing Center, a computer lab, gathering spaces for students and a multipurpose room.

July 26, 2018, marked the groundbreaking. The total cost of the project including demolition was $7,417,590.

John Randall teaches course in Colorado

Regional Fire Academy Coordinator John Randall recently taught a course on emotional intelligence in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to the 139th Medical Squadron of the U.S. Air Force. Randall is certified to teach for the USAF.

Related update on Chief C.A. “Pete” Shelton Fire Academy classes: Fall classes started as scheduled, almost two years to the date after the destruction of Fire Academy buildings and grounds due to Hurricane Harvey in 2017. Recently the advisory board met informally to endorse the program’s fresh start in its new buildings.

Tiffany Johnson hosts motivational camp for kids

Information Technology Administrative Coordinator Tiffany Johnson recently hosted the Third Annual Lush Girls Day Camp. Lush Girls founder Ebony Fowler (@ebonyfsfowler) created the camp to empower youth, ages 8-18, in Burkeville, Texas, and surrounding areas. This year’s theme was “Self-Love. Self-Care. Love Your Selfie,” highlighting inner confidence and esteem. Follow @lushgirls__ for more information or to make a donation to the 2020 camp. (Johnson is pictured in the middle.)

Professional Development Day inspires employees

Faculty and staff, wearing their LIT shirts, stood “LIT Proud” at the recent Professional Development Day. Dr. Howard received a rousing welcome with his opening address that involved audience participation and free gift cards.

Faculty led discussions on new developments in Blackboard, Starfish and Student Advising refreshers, STEP Project updates and student retention. Various program directors explained how they creatively retained students through diverse methods from analytics and social media to the introduction of childhood games.

After a lunch of hamburgers, chicken sandwiches and salad, the attendees broke into small groups, with staff reporting to various locations. Afternoon breakout sessions were assigned to various faculty and staff. Seven lucky employees received $20 gift cards for lunch, courtesy of Dr. Howard.
Bryan Neal named September Employee of the Month

Applied Sciences Instructor Bryan Neal received the honor of LIT Employee of the Month for September 2019. He was nominated by Jeffery Gibbs, a student who contacted Dr. Howard about how much of an impact Neal made in his time at the Institute.

“(Neal's) overall care and passion for physics and his students is overwhelming,” Gibbs said. “He goes above and beyond to ensure his students have a true understanding of the course work. So far in my time here at LIT he has gone further than any other teacher to help...not just me but everyone with any issue that may have come up.”
Welding Instructor Maggie Noble earns esteemed, nationally recognized certification

Welding Instructor Maggie Noble, with almost six years of experience under her belt, is now a Certified Welding Inspector (CWI), after being awarded by the American Welding Society (AWS). Noble is one of just 30 to 40 percent of candidates who passed the exam on the first try with a grade of 72 percent or higher.

“It made me realize that I am very capable of doing anything as long as I try and that I know my curriculum very well,” she said.

According to the aws.org website, the CWI exam is comprehensive and challenging, measuring the candidate’s ability to accurately complete welding inspections to specific codes. Noble is now certified to teach anywhere in America with this certificate.

Dr. Howard added, “Faculty like Maggie who go the extra mile demonstrate what we are all about at LIT, ensuring that students know the 'American Dream' is alive for anyone wanting a quality education…and a degree that works.”

50-year-old grandmother and LIT graduate reaches success

When you find yourself married at 15 and pregnant by 17, life hands you its own set of challenges. But 35 years later this single mom of two and grandmother of three is the proud role model and inspiration for her very large extended family.

Connie Laurent graduated with honors from LIT in May 2017 with a certificate in Utility Line Technology. Less than a month later, she secured a position with a global disaster solutions company. Her starting salary was $58,000, plus a truck allowance and per diem when traveling.

“Well after two years of employment here, I make $59,745,” she said, speaking from her current project in Florida. “Lamar Institute of Technology literally changed my life. To this day, there is nothing I can't do or accomplish.”

Her “aha” moment came in 2015 after she grew tired of working for 30 years in a “dead-end” medical lab job with an annual salary that capped out at $35,000. Through her medical employment, Laurent had worked with OSHA and was intrigued. She is working on her bachelor’s degree in occupational safety and health, anticipating completion in 2021.

If you would like your pictures placed on the President’s Wall, send selfies, cute pet moments and photos from your vacations.

Thanks for all you do