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Bell named 2015 LCC Distinguished Faculty Award Recipient



Vice President of Academic Affairs, Joe Burke, presents Tonya Bell with the 2015 Distinguished Faculty Award at Labette Community College. Bell was presented this award during a reception last Thursday afternoon for her contribution to the central mission of the college-to provide quality learning opportunities to LCC students.

Parsons, KS--Labette Community College announced Thursday, April 30 that Tonya Bell, Associate Professor of Communications, was named the 2015 Distinguished Faculty Award Recipient. The Distinguished Faculty Award is presented annually. Faculty members must be nominated by students or LCC employees to be considered by the selection committee. Criteria for the award include teaching effectiveness, college service, student involvement, and community service. All full-time faculty who have completed at least four years of full-time teaching at LCC are eligible to be nominated.

Bell was honored at a reception in the Cardinal Café on Thursday afternoon among colleagues, staff, and a surprise visit from her family. This award ceremony is to pay tribute to one instructor's contribution to the central mission of the college- to provide quality learning opportunities to students of LCC. This award was developed to allow the college to publicly recognize and reward an instructor who has performed in an exemplary manner.

Tonya Bell earned both Bachelor's and Masters' degrees in Communications from Pittsburg State University with graduate Dean's scholastic honors. Tonya has taught for LCC since 2009. She teaches Fundamentals of Speech, Intro to Advertising, and Public Relations.

Bell's most recent accomplishments in the teaching area include chairing a committee to develop outcomes/competencies for Interpersonal Communication and the outcomes were adopted at the most recent Core Outcomes meeting for seamless transfer across the state. She has worked with a publisher to offer a custom textbook via book rental to cut costs for speech students. She developed a partnership with the Parsons Chamber of Commerce to offer Communication majors the opportunity to intern in the field of Public Relations. Tonya keeps her students engaged from the very beginning of class with "roll call question of the day" and incorporates activities and "real world" examples into class discussions.

Her current service outside of the classroom includes: the Cardinals Caring Committee and the Enrollment Management Recruitment Committee. She serves as an adjunct instructor evaluator and is completing her third year serving as the Treasurer of the Faculty Association where she is responsible for the association's membership sub-committees. Additionally, she serves on the Faculty Senate and the negotiations team.

Tonya is very active in the Parsons and Neodesha communities and promotes the same for her students. Service learning opportunities are required where students select a cause/non-profit organization, a campus "need" or a community member in need and develops a campaign and/or an event to benefit the organization or individual. The students learn about a variety of public relations tactics to utilize in promoting their culminating event. This year's event was called "Donate to Skate" to benefit the Parsons Youth Crisis Center. Field trips are taken to KOAM TV and KLKC Radio each spring.

On a personal level, she judges two to three area high school forensics competitions each year and senior high cheerleading tryouts at Neodesha High School. Currently, she serves as president on the USD 461 (Neodesha) School Board and has been a member since 2007. She has served as a member on the USD 461 Booster Club since 2012, currently as vice president and will assume the presidency next year. She has served on the Tri-County Special Education Interlocal 607 Board since 2012 and the Neodesha Community Foundation Board since 2013.

"Ms. Bell is the reason that I went back to school after having two children, and now I'm graduating in May from LCC," said one of Bell's students. "She is the most helpful instructor and person that I know. Ms. Bell genuinely cares about what's going on in her student's classwork and lives. She does everything she can to help you succeed and goes above and beyond to do whatever she can for her students."

Another student said, "Tonya Bell is an amazing teacher. Her classroom is fun and even though it is challenging for some, she finds a way to make every student comfortable. She will spend as much time as she can to make each and every student in her class comfortable about speaking in large groups. Personally I have enjoyed every day that I have spent in her class."

For more information about the Distinguished Faculty award, contact Janice Every at janicec@labette.edu.