DTC rakes in PTK honor society awards

The old adage “Hope for a lot but expect a little,” allowed a pleasant surprise for Denmark Tech’s academic honor society.

Alpha Epsilon Psi, the Phi Theta Kappa chapter at DTC, won 15 awards in the Carolinas regional conference March 18-20.

Going into the conference, Avis Gathers anticipated DTC only winning five awards, so the 15 honors was a happy surprise, she said. Gathers is the dean of student services at DTC, which oversees student activities.

Overall, DTC came in fourth place in the conference. First place went to Trident Technical College in Charleston; second to Craven Community College of New Bern, N.C. and third to Horry-Georgetown Technical College in Conway, said Alzena Robinson, the PTK advisor at DTC. Robinson is a retired DTC instructor and a Bamberg County Council member.

“It was very exciting. For every category that we submitted an application; we got a plaque,” she said. “I’m excited because we competed against these big colleges.”

DTC competed against 74 North and South Carolina community colleges and technical schools in the conference and more than 500 students overall attended it, said John Bennett, a DTC instructor and PTK counselor.

“DTC was a co-host of the conference. It is part of maintaining its five-star rating,” he said.

The DTC Phi Theta Kappa chapter is in the top 100 chapters nationally, Bennett said.

Phi Theta Kappa is the academic honors society for two-year colleges. Students generally must have a 3.5 grade point average overall before being invited by the individual college PTK chapter to join. DTC has 10 PTK students now. PTK students need to be in an associate degree program and show traits of leadership, teamwork, scholarship and involvement in student activities, he said.

Three PTK students from DTC won individual awards: David Graham, Carolyn King-Ervin and Willow Mathias. Mathias and King-Ervin attended the conference in Clemmons, N.C.

“It was very enlightening and entertaining. I learned a lot of good information,” King-Ervin said of the conference. “Phi Theta Kappa is more about networking with other colleges to learn what’s what.”

Victories and challenges in 2011

In every life there are challenges – even in the life of a college.

It’s hard to imagine, but we are nearly a quarter of the way into 2011 and already DTC has seen some victories and challenges.

What are our victories so far this year?

First of all, DTC’s academic honors society – Phi Theta Kappa – surpassed expectations by returning with 15 awards at the Regional PTK conference in mid-March held in Clemmons, N.C. DTC has one of the most active PTK chapters and was a co-host for this year’s event.

DTC achieved a good showing at this conference, coming in fourth overall and first place in the Honors in Action award, one of the most rigorous categories. Furthermore, DTC’s top PTK student, David Graham, was recognized at the Statehouse in Columbia when the S.C. Technical College System acknowledged the S.C. PTK Academic All-Star team from the 16 technical schools.

Second, DTC has established a vital advocate, which is our newly founded DTC Foundation Board. This group in a way acts as lobbyists and fundraisers for DTC and its programs. They are also a crucial link between the current college, alumni, businesses and the community at large. Their growth and interest since being established in September 2010 is a testament to their commitment to DTC.

Third, the DTC Foundation Board helped to sponsor our annual Presidential Scholarship Gala on Feb. 3, 2011, during homecoming week. This event was a huge success. DTC’s Foundation Board had a goal to raise $25,000 for the scholarship fund, which aids deserving students with tuition and other educational expenses. At last total, our fund garnered $145,293. What an incredible display of generosity by our DTC Faculty, Staff, Alumni, Students, Business partners and the DTC community members. Thanks can’t be said enough for this accomplishment.

Another reason why I’m excited about this victory is the donation of $100,000 for a computer-based welding curriculum which was a gift from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions – also a DTC Foundation board member. This will be a substantial training boost for our students and community for years to come. What a great corporate partner!

What are the challenges facing DTC in 2011?

Funding is a chief concern. Throughout South Carolina, the budget axe has fallen sharply on public school districts as well as some four-year colleges in this tight economy.

Thankfully, the education subcommittee of the S.C. House Ways and Means committee recommended no cuts to the State Technical College System – of which DTC is a part. DTC was spared a possible 15 percent budget reduction this fiscal year. This in a sense, was a victory too and a blessing for DTC.

The President’s Corner
Dr. Michael M. Townsend Sr.

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King-Ervin is a human services major from Denmark who graduates in May.

However, King-Ervin said she will stay at DTC through the summer to complete a gerontology certificate as well.

While at the conference, King-Ervin was inducted as a PTK alumna. After DTC, King-Ervin said she would like to pursue a bachelor degree in human services with and emphasis in gerontology. at Claflin University or the University of South Carolina.

At the conference Graham won the Distinguished Chapter Officer award. In other accolades, he got the 2011 U.S.A. Academic Scholar award and was recognized at the Statehouse in Columbia March 15.

One of the biggest awards DTC won was first place for the Distinguished Honors in Action project. Students had to study a current issue; find topical information on it and perform personal field research too, Robinson said.

The DTC chapter studied the effects of “pay day” or “paycheck” loan businesses in rural areas to low-income people.

“Our research showed that people who use payday loans don’t have any choice,” she said.

Often people turn to payday loan companies because they have poor credit ratings and cannot get a traditional bank loan or they don’t have any assets as collateral to borrow against, Robinson said.

Through these meetings, DTC wants to determine what the vocational and educational needs of each church’s congregation as well as see what other unmet needs parishioners might have, said Michelle McDowell. McDowell is dean of the extended campuses in Barnwell and Allendale.

During the March 22 meeting, the group chose two liaisons as contacts between the churches and DTC. The liaisons are the Rev. Herman Wallace, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Blackville and the Rev. Sanka Davis at Rome Baptist Church in Denmark.

The group approved a mission statement: “To build a strong, collaborative networking alliance between faith-based organizations and DTC to produce quality educational and training resources that will meet the demands of a highly skilled workforce in a global society.”

Tonya Thomas, the dean of enrollment management, issued a challenge to the pastors to get 20 people from each of their churches to enroll in classes or programs at DTC.

“I want you to help us to get people from your church to come to DTC,” she said. “I want to set a goal and you to give a goal from your church. We want summer and fall 2011 to be great for DTC.”

### New faces around DTC

Alea Garvin is the new administrative assistant in the Human Resources office. Garvin has a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Claflin University, Orangeburg and several years of work experience as an administrative assistant and a human resources assistant. Her professional affiliations in the past seven years include being on the Claflin University business administration advisory board, the Orangeburg Consolidated School District 5 advisory board and an Orangeburg County Chamber of Commerce member. She is also a notary public.

### Upcoming dates

- **May 7** - DTC 2011 Commencement; 10 a.m., in the McDuffie Student Service Center.
- **May 2-4** - Student final exams.
- **May 16** - registration starts for summer school.
- **May 17** - Summer school starts.
- **April 21** - DTC choir open house, 5:30-7 p.m., Bldg. 26.
- **June 20-July 1** - Robotics Institute for middle schoolers - first session.
- **July 5-July 15** - second session.
- **July 18-29** - Robotics Institute for high schoolers.
- **June 13** - summer college Freshman Academy starts.

*For details call 803-793-5176*
DTC employee champions dads at national meeting

One of Denmark Technical College’s own represented South Carolina at a national fatherhood conference in San Francisco recently.

Terry Murvin, a DTC a building and grounds specialist, flew to California for the 12th annual conference organized by the Fathers and Families: Coalition of America group held March 1-4. Murvin has been working full-time at DTC since 2010.

Murvin’s trip was a community endeavor because Voorhees College helped with travel expenses.

During the conference, participants could attend various seminars and lectures about issues related to fatherhood. Murvin gave a lecture.

In his presentation, Murvin spoke about his troubled childhood marked by an absent father.

At his father’s funeral, Murvin — who has three daughters now — vowed to be in his children’s lives. More than 575 people attended the conference.

“There were at least 12 states that had fatherhood agencies there but none from South Carolina, which was troubling,” Murvin said. “That’s how bad it was. That’s why it’s so important to get this fatherhood program started in the state,” Murvin said.

Murvin attended the conference as a volunteer.

In his lecture, Murvin talked about being a driving force from 2000 to 2005 in the Bamberg County Fatherhood Initiative, a local program to help fathers, especially young ones, know how to be good fathers and providers — socially and economically — to their children.

Murvin wants to continue that campaign through a new initiative, which is why he went to San Francisco to network with others running similar programs.

“My passion is my neighborhood. I want to start something here,” he said.

Murvin envisions a program that teaches young men the scope of responsibilities in being a father before they become one and shows current young fathers how to improve in that role by learning life skills. Some of those skills include job search and interviewing skills and dressing for success, he said.

About 50 people attended his lecture, he said.

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However, this should be a wake-up call for us to constantly look for ways to work efficiently; use materials wisely and reduce waste. This advice should ring very true in the 2010-11 School Year and beyond.

As far as accountability is concerned, for the first time, DTC’s department heads will plan and justify their own departmental budgets and submit that information to the DTC’s budget committee, which is comprised of myself and the executive council. All budgets must be clearly aligned with DTC’s institutional goals.

A gradual waste of time, resources and materials doesn’t affect you directly but eventually will. Each DTC staff member must become efficient stewards of all resources. Other schools have faced drastic budgetary scenarios like employee furloughs, loss of benefits and reductions in workforce. I’m happy to report we are not there and I hope we won’t find ourselves in that position.

Hand-in-hand with finances is DTC’s enrollment. Generally when the economy turns, technical college enrollment trends tend to rise as people change careers or retrain. Only two S.C. schools have not seen an enrollment increase; DTC being one.

The DTC team is working to boost enrollment. We are streamlining processes to better serve students in registration and financial aid. We are looking at new marketing methods to show what DTC has to offer. One way is reaching churches through our faith-based partnerships.

DTC hosted a second luncheon with its faith-based partners (ministers) on March 22, 2011 to obtain feedback on their educational needs.

Several job vacancies also make things a bit challenging for DTC. DTC is looking to fill positions with its director of financial aid and is seeking a Vice President of Academic Affairs and an Executive Director for the DTC Foundation board. These positions are vital to DTC’s growth and development, but we do not wish to simply hire people with the basic requirements. We are seeking qualified experts that exceed our professional expectations; see our vision and have the skills to help get us there.

The staff assigned to the areas where our vacancies occur have done an incredible, even herculean, effort in shouldering added duties. Their work has not gone unappreciated.

The challenges are there and the year is young; We have the resources; we have strong faith and we remain hopeful!

Our best resources are already in place — our outstanding students, alumni, faculty, staff, DTC Foundation board, Area Commissioners and our strong partners in Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell counties.

We can meet the challenges. In fact our DTC team will exceed the challenges…yes we can. “We are a New Beginning.”
DTC job fair draws people seeking opportunities

With local job layoffs, it made interest sharp at the DTC Job Fair and Transfer Day March 17.

The event attracted about 350 people. It was open to the public and DTC students. Industries like Santee Cooper, the public utility; Horsehead Corp., a Barnwell County metal smelter; AXA Advisors, a financial consulting company, other businesses and the armed services had representatives there.

The general public came early to job search. For students, the event was a chance to talk with representatives of four-year colleges about transferring once associate degrees or prerequisites have been earned at DTC.

Jamie Baughman of Barnwell was job prospecting at the event. Baughman was on the deer hunting crew at Savannah River Site until lay-offs in early March.

Baughman earned a certificate in multi-skill maintenance at DTC last year and hopes to use it at a new job.

“It was a really good program,” he said of the maintenance certificate program. “I liked using the modules. It was more hands-on than what I was used to. Another thing that helped out is that we had stuff on the computer.”

In the program, students learn about different maintenance scenarios through modules simulating pneumatic, hydraulic and heating and cooling systems at the DTC Barnwell campus.

One company seeking new employees at job fair was AXA Advisors, which is affiliated with AXA Equitable, an insurance and finance company. AXA Advisors needs employees to expand its presence into the Orangeburg area, said Julia Parks. Parks is the vice president of the company. AXA Advisors needs employees to expand its presence into the Orangeburg area, said Julia Parks. Parks is the vice president of the company.

Parks is seeking entrepreneurs with two- or four-year degrees, she said.

Santee Cooper was looking at the available workforce in the area.

“We have a number of positions available but we are always looking for technical people. About 70 percent of Santee Cooper jobs are technical positions,” said Hazel Leaphart, a representative at the job fair.

Electromechanical engineering and electronic technology are two DTC majors applicable to Santee Cooper, Leaphart said.

“Both these are great for us,” she said. “Either of those majors is attractive for our company.”

There were 36 businesses, colleges and agencies at the DTC job fair this year, said Jay Fields, the DTC career placement and planning director.

Dr. Michael M. Townsend Sr., the president of DTC, welcomed guests to the job fair at its start.

“I was very impressed by the support of our local businesses coming to our event,” he said later.

The Air Force, Navy and Marines had recruiters at the event too.

“We’ve got a lot of good programs and people interested in the Reserves,” said Navy recruiter Petty Officer Gregg Thompson.

The Navy is particularly seeking recruits for its engineering, nuclear technology and SEALs programs. Most Navy experience has transferable work skills to the private sector, he said.

DTC students – Corey Andrews, Edgar Hosey, Marleyna McCario and Gerrod McKie during the Feb. 23 show for challenging themselves and inspiring her.

Jones also mentioned DTC, she said.

Jones talked about another inspiration, Marcus Bracey, a 2009 DTC alumnus who earned a degree at Morehouse College in Atlanta and is working on a master’s degree.

“This is what you can do once you go through the portal of Denmark Tech,” Jones said.

Making the most of one’s time is not just about being efficient, it is a catalyst for creativity, she said.

“One becomes the most creative when they minimize their time. Immediacy is the tool for entry into any door,” she said.

DTC student Carolyn Jones echoed these themes in two portrayals of early civil rights activists Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. Jones gave comments on how they would see today’s world.

“Do you have any idea what the struggle was for? It’s about respect,” Jones said as Tubman. “Will you be with me about better education?”

Other features included a pantomime of a black spiritual by Kathryn Moore and hymns from the DTC choir.

“Their youth have the obligation to do their best possible regardless of the endeavor because of the atrocities of what our fore-brothers and fore-sisters had to go through,” said Bobbie Jones.
Highlights from Homecoming 2011 at DTC

Above: Louis E. Boyd, left, the DTC Upstate alumni chapter president, and Willie Caldwell, another DTC alumnus, flip through a scrapbook of early DTC history.

Above: The DTC Panthers are cheered on to the court before the homecoming game against Voorhees College.

Above: DTC president Dr. Michael M. Townsend Sr., center, and Voorhees president Dr. Cleveland Sellers, inaugurate a new tradition in the schools’ rivalry: possession of the Golden Claw trophy for whomever defeats the other in basketball.

DTC president Dr. Michael M. Townsend Sr., far left, and DTC Foundation chair Josephine Caldwell, far right, accept a donation to the DTC Foundation for the late Willie Cantey scholarship fund during homecoming. Cantey was a DTC instructor. The academic support center was dedicated in his honor Feb. 5 over the Homecoming 2011 weekend. Below: Building 26 is renamed and dedicated for Samuel Faust, an early DTC employee at the same ceremony for the Cantey dedication.

Above: DTC alumni listen to a “state of the college” address by DTC president Dr. Michael M. Townsend Sr. during an alumni meeting on campus over homecoming weekend, Feb. 5.
Rewind: A look at Denmark Tech in 1950s

It was 1954 and Yankees baseball star Joe DiMaggio married Marilyn Monroe. Polio was halted with the new Salk vaccine. RCA made the first color television set with a 12-inch screen. Price: $1,000. The average cost of a new home was $10,250; a new car, $1,700. IBM made the first computer with a vacuum tube “electronic” brain that could perform 10 million operations an hour. Elvis Presley recorded his first hit, “That’s All Right.”

DTC was visited recently by the Office of Environmental Management, which is under the U.S. Department of Energy. The visit turned into a successful opportunity for DTC. The visit was to inspect the progress, performance and funding allocations of the $2.4 million program that had been awarded to DTC. The program is divided into three components.

1) National Center of Construction Education and Research (NCCER) -- The project leader for this component is Robert Brown, the DTC associate vice president for workforce development and continuing education.

2) Environmental monitoring and instrumentation certification – The DTC project leaders are Dr. Meenu Shukla-Dennis, a biology instructor and Ambrose Chukwuka, a chemistry teacher.

3) Expansion of the DTC’s electromechanical engineering technology program – The project leader is Dr. Amrish Lavania, Dean of Industrial and Related Technologies.

At the end of the visit, the auditors were so impressed with DTC’s presentations, including three of its STEM Academy students’ presentations, that they invited DTC to its upcoming National Environmental Management Conference in Charleston, S. C. this year. The focus of the conference is “Using New Technology to Reduce American Dependence on Foreign Oil.”

The auditors informed Dr. Townsend that they were highly impressed with DTC’s Environmental Management Program, most notably, the involvement of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Academy in the program. The auditors are also requesting that Denmark Technical College demonstrate its projects’ “best practices” relating to environmental management at the conference. This is a national conference which will be attended by experts in the environmental management field from around the world.

With permission from the dorm matron and she must accompany the student upon her return which must be before 5:30 pm. Furthermore, all visits to town must be chaperoned even when in a group and the matron must be notified by noon on the day they wish to go.

There were restrictions in the handbook on female students traveling in cars as well: “No woman student will be permitted to travel to or from home in a car unless the parents send their written approval to the principal stating the name of the person that the student may ride with.”

DTC applies for job assessment grant

Denmark Technical College recently submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). If funded, the three-year grant would provide $500,000 to implement a WorkKeys initiative in Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell counties – DTC’s service area.

WorkKeys is an evaluation process measuring skill levels in reading, math, locating information, teamwork and other work-related foundation skills. The grant would put in place an infrastructure for WorkKeys assessments and targeted instruction that would serve all ninth through 12th graders in the DTC service area schools as well as college students, adult education clients, unemployed laborers and general population.

The significance of obtaining this grant is that it will provide a standardized system of job skill assessment and training through WorkKeys, said DTC president Dr. Michael M. Townsend Sr.

The proposal also provides WorkKeys job profilers who work with area industries to identify skill requirements for jobs. Local school districts and economic development agencies have agreed to partner with DTC on the initiative.

“We have high hopes the HUD grant will be funded. Once implemented, the proposed WorkKeys initiative will provide this area with a competitive advantage in the economic development arena. By focusing on a community-wide approach, we expect to see job opportunities and per capita income in the area rise,” said Bob Brown, the DTC associate vice president for workforce development.

College expenses in 1954

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