

## Work-based Learning & Placement?

We are changing our name from Student Employment and Cooperative Education to **Work-based Learning and Placement** to better align with revisions made to the NC Community College System's Cooperative Education portion of the Curriculum Procedures Reference Manual.

The primary goal of the revision was to increase the utilization of meaningful work-

based learning experiences by providing terminology (work-based learning vs. cooperative learning) which more clearly reflects the educational experience. Often times, students do not understand what cooperative education is and even finding information online is difficult unless you know where to look.

In order to better serve our students and be consistent with

the new changes, Executive Council approved changing the name of Student Employment and Cooperative Education (SECE) to Work-based Learning and Placement (WBLP). The name will be officially changed in printed and online documents by Fall 2014.

Work-based Learning and Placement will continue to be housed in Lena Sue Beam, Suite 135.



### Inside...

Awards & Nominations	2
Employer/ Graduate Spotlight	2
Maximizing Co-op Opportunity	3
Why an Internship?	4
Graduate Success Story	5
CCN Information	5
WBLP Spring Initiatives	7
Upcoming Events	8

## Awards & Nominations

- **Tammy Wall**, Co-op student in Student Employment and Cooperative Education, was the recipient of the 2013 Outstanding Graduate Award in Logistics. She is now working with Tuesday Morning as an Assistant Manager.
- **Diana Asbury** was nominated for the North Carolina Cooperative Education Association's William D. Weston Student of the Year Award in November 2013.
- **Dwayne Burke**, with Families Intact, was nominated for the North Carolina Cooperative Education Association's Outstanding Employer Award in November 2013
- The **Gaston County Health Department** was nominated for the Distinguished Partners in Excellence Award for 2014
- **Missy Fox**, Specialist in Student Employment and Cooperative Education, was nominated for the Gaston College Customer Service Award.

# Employer/Graduate Spotlight

The Automotive Technology Program at Gaston College was the first program to incorporate Cooperative Education Experience (Co-op). Co-op is an academic program, which combines a student's formal training with hands-on work experience. The work experience is an integral component of the student's education which supplements academic knowledge with personal growth and professional development. The work experience is related to the student's major field of study and allows students to earn college credit while working.



**Mervin Cloninger** was in one of the first graduating classes from Gaston College. He started at Gaston College, formerly known as Gaston Tech, in 1966 and graduated in 1967. He was one of seven graduates in the Automotive Technology Program. Mervin, along with several others who graduated in this program, left

right after graduation and went to war in Vietnam. All graduates returned home except for Roger Shuler. Roger was killed in the line of duty. Mervin considered him a good classmate and a great friend.

Mervin started working in the automotive field at Lewis Motors when he was 15 years old. After returning from Vietnam in 1969, he opened his own business called Cloninger Auto Repair. Mervin said, "The automotive industry has changed over the years. Today you have to have good computer skills, reading and comprehension skills, ability to understand how things work, and good math skills." Mervin also stated, "This industry requires ongoing training and the ability to research a problem and fix the problem."

Mervin has been a major supporter of Gaston College and the automotive program for years. He currently sits on the Automotive Technology Program Advisory Board and provides students with hands-on work experience while in school. Mervin has five employees, and all five employees are graduates of Gaston College's Automotive Technology Program.

Thank you to all Employers for providing full time, part time, and cooperative education experiences to Gaston College students and graduates!

# Maximizing Your Co-op Opportunity

Employer article by Dwayne Burke



One of the most wonderful things about working in the human services field is the satisfaction of looking back at the close of the day and knowing we truly are making a difference. In fact, this is the most common reasons given by human service workers when I ask them why they do what they do. Whether one is working with children, senior adults, cancer patients, or any other human service recipient, it is rewarding to know that we are not merely making a living. We are making a difference

We at **Gaston Together/Keeping Families Intact (KFI)** are privileged to partner with Gaston College in training a new generation of human service professionals. Gaston Together/KFI's piece of the human service equation revolves around connecting Gaston County citizens with the resources that are needed to address the challenges of generational poverty.

Almost 20 percent of Gaston County residents live below the recognized poverty line.

While there are many available resources to support these citizens, navigating the system can be overwhelming. Often the situation is made more difficult by transportation challenges, low literacy levels, and other factors that are not unique to the impoverished, but are intensified by poverty.

Gaston Together/KFI works through a network of schools, churches, community centers and other work sites to establish relationships with the citizens who desire support in making these vital connections. By offering parenting, healthy living, budgeting, and other relevant classes, our relationships deepen, and we are able to recruit and provide intensive case management to our participants. KFI workers get to accompany them on their personal journeys beyond the grip of whatever has them trapped in tough situations. We are thrilled to walk alongside participants as they obtain GED's, relocate to improved living conditions, attend college, and take a myriad of other steps beyond their current situations.

Gaston College Co-op students join us in every aspect of these rewarding and often challenging journeys. A Co-op may find himself or herself planning recruitment events, preparing lesson plans, documenting case work, facilitating workshops, or carrying out any of the other components that are necessary for us to obtain effective outcomes.

Each day is different, but the mission remains constant as, together, we connect citizens with

resources to support them on their journeys.

Here are a few suggestions for **MAXIMIZING YOUR CO-OP OPPORTUNITY.**

1) **Communication** is the key to a solid co-op experience. The only 'bad' question is the unasked question. This is your chance to learn. The more questions you ask, the more you learn.

I encourage Co-op students to email / text / call with any inquiries that need immediate responses. It is also helpful to keep a running list of questions to be addressed when you meet with your Co-op supervisor.

2) **Bloggng** is another great tool for maximizing your work experience. There is an extra level of engagement when one takes the time to blog or journal each day's experiences. I encourage bloggers to share with their supervisor before posting just to be sure HIPPA privacy expectations are honored.

3) **Recognizing the entire human service process is another critical element of your success.** When working in human services, it is easy to vacillate between two extremes. One extreme involves trying to personally meet every need of every client. While this is honorable, it is impossible. Most human service providers do a few things well, and reach out to our partner agencies and collaborators to meet needs outside our individual expertise.

[continued on page 4](#)



## Maximizing Your Co-op... continued from page 3

The second extreme can occur as one becomes singularly focused on his or her agency's area of expertise without recognizing the other issues a client family may encounter. It is helpful to remember that people do not live in a vacuum. Just because we have helped them secure a doctor's appointment does not mean they have the means to get to that appointment. By remaining cognizant of the bigger picture and making referrals, we can ensure that needs are effectively met.

- 4) **Resource discovery and development** are among your most valuable assets as human service professional. Co-ops are encouraged to keep records on every human service partner / provider they meet. Having these relationships available when you are in the thick of your work will prove invaluable. A current list of who serves whom in our community is available at: [www.gastonfaithnetwork.org](http://www.gastonfaithnetwork.org)
- 5) **Reading** is another way

to enhance your Co-Op experience. Here are several books and media resources for you to consider:

- a. *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* by Payne - This short, easy to read book establishes a paradigm for understanding poverty and its impact. Dr. Payne's website is also filled with helpful resources: [www.ahaprocess.com](http://www.ahaprocess.com)
- b. *Codependent No More / Beyond Codependency* by Beatty - Beatty's book is more practical than scientific, yet it helps the reader grasp and address the cycles of codependency that exist among people of all socio-economic levels.
- c. *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion* by Fr. Greg Boyle - To call this book "exceptional" is an understatement. It is a must read for everyone.
- d. *Precious*, the movie - This movie is gritty and at times,

painful to watch. It will, however, take the view behind the veil of poverty, revealing some of the daily challenges faced by the very people we are committed to serve.

### Miscellaneous Blogs and Links:

We Must -

- <http://gastonfaithnetwork.org/we-must-we-must-we-must/>
- Loving All Our Neighbors - Poverty in our own zip code - <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10152874601965080.1073741847.523450079&type=1&l=791b8dcc06>
- Keeping Families Intact Overview - <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10152783826720080.1073741836.523450079&type=1&l=d4b624e87a>
- <http://www.colourbox.com/preview/1946329-908747-communication-tags-abstract-art-illustration.jpg>
- <http://thoughtelf.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/puzzle.jpg>

## Student Article - Why an Internship?

By Thomas Davis

December 17, 2013

All journeys, to any destination, begin with placing one step before the other. Along this journey there will be many changes in scenery, some of which will be pleasing to the eyes, and some that cause concern and even some dread of whether the journey is worth the costs involved. Why go? Is the

discovery valuable enough for the potential risks, and who will benefit from this discovery?

These are questions; for me, that the answers can only be found in the initial purpose, and revealed in the outcome(s) at destination's end. At the end of the day, it is the thrill of the unexpected that has always motivated me to seek new knowledge which can only be harvested from foreign academic soil.

Every intentional journey is void of the "windmill" behavior of Don Quixote, while adventurous seems to be the scavenger type of search for knowledge that comes from swimming against the current, although even this adverse behavior is necessary in its calling.

Human Services, being of service to others, is part of my personal value and belief dynamics which

continued on page 8

# Graduate Success Story

By Joe DePriest

jdepriest@charlotteobserver.com

Posted: Wednesday, Jul. 10, 2013, reprinted with permission

## Fitness trainer: 'If I don't help but one person my job is done'

When **Huston Sheppard** enrolled as the first student in Gaston College's new Health and Fitness Science program in 2011, he already was running his own part-time fitness business.

But the former long-haul truck driver, who'd survived two heart attacks and overcome addictions, wanted to expand his knowledge in a field he was passionate about.

In his late 50s, Sheppard was the oldest student in the class. While there, he designed and led an original health and exercise program for personnel at the Gastonia Fire Department.

Fitness turned his life around, and he often shares the story of how that happened. "It's about how I traveled the bad road to get to the good road," he said. "I was left here because the good Lord had something special for me to do."

Sheppard, 59, a certified fitness trainer who works for the Gastonia Parks and Recreation Department, is developing an ongoing fitness program designed specifically for fire, police and emergency employees in the city and county. He hopes to market the program to government organizations whose employ-



ees perform such tasks as loading patients into ambulances and dragging fire hoses.

But his journey to this point has been a long one. After graduating from Bessemer City High School in 1972, he spent four years in the Army and then worked as a machinist. In the late 1980s, he started driving a truck. "It was over the road, all 50 states," said Sheppard, who'd gotten married by then. "Life on the road was kind of tough and lonely."

Years earlier, he'd started working out regularly and tried to keep it up. At truck stops, he jogged a few miles before meals and carried healthy snacks with him.

### Near-fatal attack

But the good habits gradually slipped away, replaced by the bad.

Cigars came first; then cocaine. "I knew my lifestyle had to change for the better," Sheppard said. "I wasn't raised to do crazy stuff like that."

A wakeup call came in 1997, when he had a near-fatal heart attack. Sheppard gave up cigars but stayed on cocaine for three months after leaving the hospital. "Then I prayed to God to take the taste of cocaine out of my mouth," Sheppard said. "And since 1997, I've never picked it up."

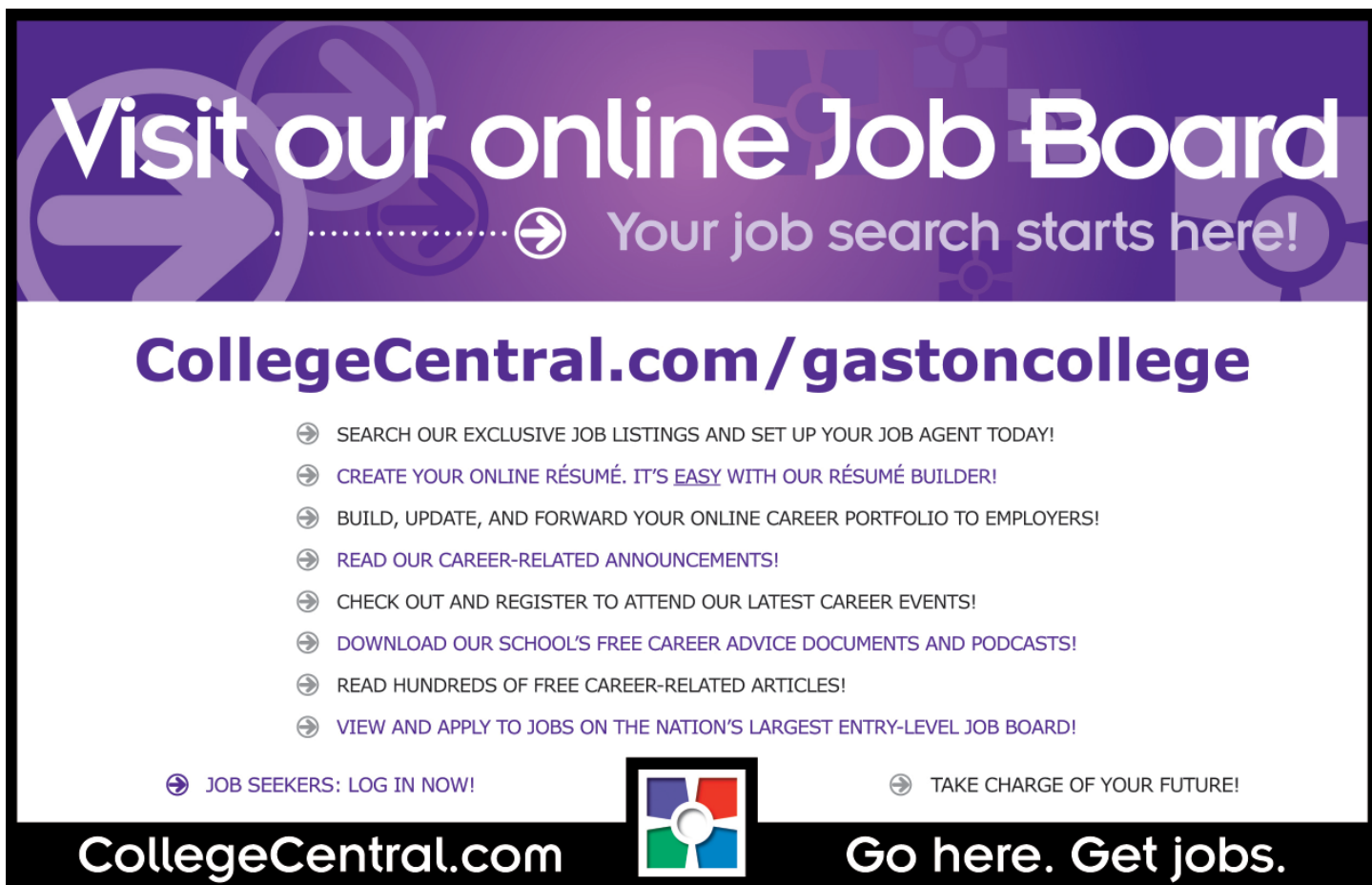
Sheppard worked at furniture factory, the Kings Mountain YMCA and Gastonia Central YMCA. The YMCA connections and going to cardiac rehab rekindled his interest in fitness.

Staying in shape became a passion. By 2004 he had the qualifications to open a fitness training business

[continued on page 8](#)

# Central College Network (CCN) Information

- In April 2014, Gaston College will celebrate the two year anniversary of implementation of CCN.
- CCN has over 1100 students and graduates registered, and over 600 employers registered.




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Gaston College hosted a Users Group session for College Central Network on February 26th. The session was very beneficial and we learned of new tools that will be implemented in College Central Network such as the ability to upload documents, better tracking features and social media usages. College Central Network plans to possibly hold these information sessions annually.

Seated (L-R) Vickie Smith, Gaston College; Missy Fox, Gaston College; Katie Wohlman, Lenoir-Rhyne University. Middle (L-R) Jennifer Prince, Salem College, Graduate Intern from Appalachian State University; Monica Boyd, Salem College; Joy Miller, College Relations Manager, College Central Network. Back (L-R) Byron Morrell, Greenville Technical College; Trent Payne, Erskine College; Steve Jennings, Greenville Technical College.

# Work-based Learning and Placement – Spring Initiatives

The Work-based Learning and Placement Office is partnering with individual divisions across campus to provide placement assistance in discipline specific areas as needed or requested.

Below is a partial listing of upcoming events.

## Business and Information Technologies:

- *Portfolio Showcase* - April 24, 12:30- 12:50 PM. The Showcase will be held in conjunction with BIT's Annual Advisory Council Meeting. Each department will select two students to participate in the Showcase and Advisory Members will view the portfolios and provide students with feedback. The selected students will be required to attend a Career Portfolio workshop provided by WBLP.

## The following workshop dates are open for all students:

- April 2, 2014 at 12:30 PM in CET 33
- April 2, 2014 at 5:30 PM in LSB 122
- April 4, 2014 at 12:30 PM in CET 33

## Engineering and Industrial Technologies:

- *Student Presentations* (EGR 285 Capstone Course) – Date and time to be determined. Employers will be invited to attend the EGR 285 Capstone Course Class meeting where students will demonstrate what they have designed and built. This is a capstone course for Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Mechatronics.
- *Graduate Panels* – Dates and times to be determined. Graduates of HVAC, Automotive, and Electrical will be invited to speak to current students about their career paths.
- *Workshops*



## Health and Human Services:

- *Health and Human Services Career Expo 2014* – March 26 from 2:00 – 6:00 PM in DBC 174 – North Wing
- *Human Services Mini Career Expo 2014* – April 7. Location: Kimbrell Campus

## Workshops (Open to All Students):

- *Job Seeking Skills Workshop* – March 27 at 8:00 AM on the Lincoln Campus
- *How to Navigate NC Works Online* – March 27 at 1:00 PM in LC 123 on the Lincoln Campus
- *Interviewing Skills Workshop* – April 17 at 2:00 PM
- Resume Assistance provided by the Writing Center

Please let us know if WBLP can assist your students and graduates in preparing for their career and networking with employers.



## Why an Internship? continued from page 4

are deeply rooted in Christian principles and a cultural reference that expands more than four hundred years of communal reciprocity among its people that is a capstone of survival skills.

I am excited about my upcoming fieldwork experience and looking

forward to seeing the connection between core knowledge acquired up to this point and where the interface becomes applicable to experience. I enter this uncharted water with realistic expectations and a flexible motivational spirit.

## Graduate Success Story

continued from page 5

– Huston's Xtreme Training Systems. A year later, he suffered a second heart attack and had five stents installed, for a total of six.

When Gaston College began its first Health and Fitness Science program, Sheppard was the first student to sign up. "He brought a lot of insights to his classmates and instructors, too," said program coordinator/instructor Jacob Surratt. "We were very blessed to have him."

He felt Sheppard would be a good fit for the program at the Gastonia Fire Department "and we gave him free reign to design it. He made it his own special program. He did a wonderful job."

### Aerobic activities

Gastonia Deputy Fire Chief William Thompson said physical fitness was already emphasized before the Gaston College program led by Sheppard.

In 1980, as a 52-year-old Gastonia firefighter filled out an incident report shortly after battling a house fire, he suffered a fatal heart attack.

Thompson, who joined the Gastonia department in 1987, wanted to make sure firefighters were physically fit. He wrote a master's thesis on the subject and in 2002 the city got a federal grant to put workout equipment, including treadmills, barbells and weights, in every fire station.

Sheppard's six-month program focused on aerobic activities. "A lot of the guys would go to his program and then go to the gym and continue workouts," Thompson. "Others who'd been doing nothing were inspired to do better."

Sheppard hopes he can keep inspiring people to stay fit. "It's about quality of life – feeling good for you, your kids and grandkids," he said. "If I don't help but one person, my job is done."

## Upcoming Events

- **Resume and Interview Workshop** – March 1, 2014 at 8:00 AM for NC Back to Work Trucking Students
- **Health and Human Services Divisional Career Fair** – March 26, 2014 from 2:00 – 6:00 PM
- **Job Seeking Skills Workshop** – March 27, 2014 at 8:00 AM on the Lincoln Campus
- **"How to Navigate NC Works Online"** – March 27, 2014 at 1:00 PM in Room 123 on the Lincoln Campus
- **Career Portfolio Workshop** – April 2, 2014 at 12:30 PM and at 5:00 PM
- **Interviewing Skills Workshop** – April 17, 2014 at 2:00 PM.
- **Business and Information Technology Division Portfolio Showcase** – April 24, 2014 (by invitation only)
- **Mock Interviewing** – May 1, 2014 at 2:00 PM (Time slots are limited.)

Please contact the WBL-P Office at **704.922.6360** for more information.



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