Colleges create program to benefit working adults

KATRINA SEGERS
STAFF WRITER

Nontraditional students now have a traditional way to earn a degree.

The University of Kansas Edwards Campus and Johnson County Community College have partnered to create Start2Finish.

"We're targeting working adults who either have some college or zero college experience and they would be able to start with us and complete an associate's degree and move on to the Edwards campus and complete a bachelor's degree in one of the programs," JCCC Admissions Director Pete Belk said.

KU Edwards Campus Vice Chancellor Bob Clark said the program is "a reflection of the strong relationship" the campus has with JCCC and discussion of a program to help offer a seamless transition from an associate's program to a bachelor's program began some years ago.

"When someone starts with JCCC they can see the light through the end of the tunnel with a bachelor's degree at the KU Edwards Campus," Clark said.

"It's created a vision for public higher education that wouldn't have existed before."

Students in the program will experience individual attention, Belk said.

"We will make sure we are communicating to students exactly what courses they need," Belk said. "They will be able to meet in any semester with people from the Edwards Campus for that added reassurance along the way that they are getting closer to a bachelor's degree."

Belk said JCCC encourages students to earn the general education associate of arts degree.

"The associate of arts degree works with the programs they have at Edwards and allows students not to have to re-take courses along the way," Belk said.

Clark said for some students the degree is a "reflection of hope that their life is going to improve" because they have chosen "to better their lives with higher education."

"It's created a vision for public higher education that wouldn't have existed before," Clark said. "It's a vision of what can happen with higher education in Johnson County."

Clark said the program impacts the community, economy and individuals because it helps people improve their business prospects.

Clark said students can earn degrees in literature, language and writing, molecular biosciences, developmental psychology and public administration.

"There are many other programs that are in demand and we are hoping to add more," Clark said.
TAKING A DIFFERENT LOOK AT...

KU student takes pilgrimage to Japan’s Buddhist temples

HOLLY KRAMER
STAFF WRITER

Walking 800 miles around a small Japanese island helped Eric Zautner, 25, Overland Park, learn about Buddhism.

Zautner, a University of Kansas student, learned about the Shikoku pilgrimage while surfing the Net.

“When I get bored, I just go online and try to learn new things,” Zautner said. “I went from there. Basically, when I find something I want to study, I go out and try to learn everything that I can and kind of become obsessed with it.”

Shikoku is the smallest of Japan’s four main islands. Shikoku pilgrims visit 88 sacred temples around the island. About 100,000 to 200,000 people travel the pilgrimage annually and about 2,000 people walk.

The course usually takes about 50 to 60 days to complete on foot but Zautner finished in 40.

Walkers need mental and physical training.

Zautner said he got much of his at KU.

“I would walk up and down hills at KU,” Zautner said. “I would try to walk and bike as much as possible while trying to carry as much weight as possible with extra textbooks and stuff. I also went to the gym for weight training.”

Zautner said he just needed to brush up on his language skills after taking two years of Japanese classes at Johnson County Community College.

“I’m not fluent but I’m still above basic survival skills and being there forced me to learn more,” Zautner said.

Kobo-Daishi, a Japanese monk and scholar, founded the Shingon school of Buddhism and started the pilgrimage. There are many stories about the journey’s ancient roots.

“There’s fact and myth,” Zautner said. “The actual pilgrimage with the temples and paths is about 400 or 500 years old but it goes back 1,200 years. Each site or temple has its own story and each was said to be founded by Daishi.”

Zautner started his journey Oct. 2 and finished Nov. 10.
Signs direct pilgrims to each temple. Some people take the pilgrimage backward for good luck, but Zautner said he took the original, clockwise route to avoid confusion.

The pilgrimage leads people around the periphery of the island. Travelers find themselves walking through forests and busy streets.

“The path can be anywhere,” Zautner said. “It can be where there is no path at all – like on the side of a mountain or dirt roads – all the way to walking down the sides of a big highway.”

Zautner said he stopped at restaurants or convenience stores along the way. At night, he stayed in youth hostels or bed and breakfasts.

Weight loss became a concern, Zautner said.

“I noticed at the beginning I was losing so much weight, and I like to eat Japanese food but it’s too light to keep my weight on so I would try to eat one Japanese meal a day and a lot of snacks throughout the day,” Zautner said. “There were a lot of vending machines and convenience stores. I went through hundreds of cans of juice and water.”

Walking took a toll on Zautner’s body.

“The first two weeks, my feet really hurt,” he said. “At one point, I had blisters on all my toes, but then after that point, they toughened up and I could walk without being tired. By the end, my feet didn’t feel bad. It took awhile for everything to stop hurting. I found the best way to cure it is to keep walking.”

Zautner said he does not practice Buddhism but the pilgrimage offered a journey of discovery within him and of a different culture.

“Some people do this because someone in their family died or for their religion,” Zautner said.

“Lots of people do it for the challenge; you don’t have to be devout. I wanted a challenge at this time in my life, and I felt that basically, ‘Why not?’

“I had been interested in that culture for years. It’s the best way to experience the culture the way it was before the cities. If you want to see a more traditional part, it is the best way. I learned that I tend to jump from one thing to another and don’t finish things, so I wanted to do the same thing day after day even though it was tough.”

Zautner said he met kind people along the way.

“People want to help you because they believe by helping you they are participating in the pilgrimage,” Zautner said. “It ranged from food to advice, and resting at someone’s place. They would give me mandarin oranges. I got so many of those. They would just rush them out to me.”

Zautner said he traveled for a while with a woman who took him to her parents’ house and gave him gifts.

“They thought having a foreigner at their house was so neat,” Zautner said. “They couldn’t believe it.”

To document the trip, Zautner said he bought a book with pictures of each temple and priests or people at the temple signed the book.

Each temple had certain types of buildings, Zautner said.

“There is a main gate, a place to wash your hands, a place to pray,” Zautner said. “I would light candles and incense. I would go to each of the buildings and stand in silence because I’m not Buddhist. They don’t really care what you are; you don’t have to be part of their faith or anything. You can do as much as you want.”

Zautner brought about $6,000, but only spent
His mother, Marie, said she had worries when she first found out about the journey.

"I was quite apprehensive when he first told me that he wanted to do this," Marie said. "It sounded very dangerous. He showed me information online and in books that he had studied and I knew that he was determined to have this experience and nothing was going to stop him. He had saved up money and was prepared to take a semester off from his studies at KU in Lawrence."

Marie said she prayed for Eric to return home safely.

Zautner, who returns to school next month, said his pilgrimage benefited his family.

"It was good for them, too," Zautner said. "I wanted to show them I was serious about something I wanted to do and enrich their lives because it's something that most people here have never heard about."

WHILE VISITING the various temples on his sojourn, Eric Zautner snaps this shot of the Shoryuji Red Pagoda.
Merrim playright competes in festival

Five plays by three University of Kansas creative writing students will compete at the regional conference of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Omaha from Jan. 20-26.

Nicholas Medved, Merrim, senior in English, son of Sandra J. Medved and Shawnee Mission East High School graduate, will enter a staged reading of his 10-minute play "The Gazelle." The winner in this category will advance to the national theater competition in April at the Kennedy Center in Washington.
Chief Breshears congratulates law enforcement center grads

KCK Police Chief Sam Breshears congratulated 57 graduates of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center at a Dec. 21 ceremony at the 4-H Encampment Building on the Kansas State Fairgrounds in Hutchinson.

Graduates from local departments included Patrolman Nicholas B. Anderson and Officer Matthew Golubski of the KU Medical Center Police Department and Officer/Ranger Paul Panjada of the Wyandotte County Park Rangers.

The graduates, who began their training course Sept. 10, represented 38 municipal, county and state law enforcement agencies from across Kansas. They were the 194th basic training class of graduates. The training center is a unit of University of Kansas Continuing Education. Established in 1968 as the central law enforcement training facility for the state, the center is near Yoder.
Stangl Completes GAPY

Andrew R. Stangl, of Wichita, was among 68 University of Kansas students from 25 departments to complete the Global Awareness Program during the summer and fall 2007 semesters.

Stangl, an Andover High School graduate, has been majoring in political science and French. He is the son of Robert and Vickie Stangl.

GAP has recognized students for studying abroad, taking courses with an international focus, learning foreign languages and being significantly involved in international co-curricular activities. All undergraduates were eligible to participate.

To receive GAP certification, students were required to complete two of three requirements.

More than 40 student organizations are affiliated with GAP, which means their members receive GAP credit. Engineers Without Borders and the Turkish Student Organization became affiliated this fall.

Launched by the International Programs office in fall 2004, GAP has recognized more than 450 students in the past three years. Students earn certification on their KU transcripts and will be honored at a luncheon in the spring. More than 1,200 KU students are currently participating.
State of the State
7 p.m. Monday night

KPTS will provide live coverage of Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius' 2008 State of the State Address at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 14.

The hour-long coverage will be hosted by Jennifer Schmidt, Senior Fellow with the Dole Institute of Politics at Kansas University and the host of Ask Your Legislator on KPTS.

In addition to the Governors' address, our coverage will also include the Republican response from Melvin Neufeld, Speaker of the House, as well as analysis and reaction from a variety of guests.

KPTS will also be providing pool coverage of the address for other radio and TV stations with a distribution point inside the Statehouse.
Tilson graduates law enforcement training

Derby News Report
news@derbyreporter.com

Kansas City, Kan., Police Chief Sam Breshears congratulated Callie A.R. Tilson of the Derby Police Department, along with 56 other graduates of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center, at a Dec. 21 ceremony at the 4-H Encampment Building on the Kansas State Fairgrounds.

The graduates, who began their training course Sept. 10, represented 38 municipal, county and state law enforcement agencies from across Kansas. They were the 194th basic training class of graduates.

The training center is a unit of University of Kansas Continuing Education. Established in 1968 as the central law enforcement training facility for the state, the center is near Yoder.

Graduates receive certificates of course completion and Kansas law enforcement certification from the Kansas Commission on Peace Officers’ Standards and Training, the state’s law enforcement licensing authority. The training course fulfills the state requirement for law enforcement training. Classroom lectures and hands-on applications help train officers to solve the increasingly complex problems they face in the line of duty.

The center trains the majority of municipal, county and state law enforcement officers in Kansas and oversees the training of the remaining officers at seven authorized and certified academy programs operated by local law enforcement agencies and the Kansas Highway Patrol.

About 350 officers enroll annually in the 14-week basic training program. The center offered continuing education and specialized training to more than 2,500 Kansas officers last year. Funding for the training center is generated from court docket fees from municipal and state courts. No funds from the state’s general revenue are used to operate the center.
Legislative update

Happy New Year to you all, my wish to you is for a very prosperous, productive and rewarding 2008.

The 2008 legislative session begins January 14th and we are looking forward to addressing some very important issues mostly dealing with social programs, adding or reducing funding to existing programs, and my all time favorite, trying to prevent duplication of services and identify and halt wasteful spending.

We could throw in a little personal responsibility for our own actions, look at what we can do individually and collectively to make this a better state and improve our own lot in life.

Speaking of self-help go to www.networkkansas.com, and you will find a website that is full of information that provides services and contacts for companies and individuals wishing to start or improve your business. This group “NetWork Kansas” is made of experts that can help you market products or ideas, find partners, identify sources of funding, and generally work with you to bring your ideas to life.

In November six communities were selected to become “E-Communities” that will partner with NetWork Kansas to achieve the following: 1) Establish a fund for entrepreneurs and small business owners that is administered by each community; 2) Map all local, regional and state assets available to assist entrepreneurs in each E-Community; 3) Develop a long-term tracking and accountability system to measure business and economic growth; and 4) Form long-term partnerships with more than 400 NetWork Kansas partners statewide that assist entrepreneurs and small businesses in order to provide a positive impact on the Kansas economy.

The six communities selected are: Cowley County, Garnett (Anderson County), Great Bend (Barton County), Rawlins County, Sterling/Alden (Rice County), and Thomas County.

Here is a profile of one of the selected communities; Thomas County: Three defining factors have had the greatest impact on the development of Thomas County: Interstate 70; rich agricultural assets; and Colby Community College. The efforts of Colby Banker and State of Kansas Legislator, August Lauterbach influenced the northwest “jog” if I-70 that is still sometimes referred as the “Lauterbach Curve.”

With an abundance of high quality farmland, Thomas County ranks high in the production of wheat and feed grains. In 1970, a new campus was opened for Colby Community College, which has continued to grow to serve the educational needs of western Kansas's residents. Additional information can be acquired at NetWork Kansas, 1845 Fairmont, Box 202, Wichita, KS 67260, or call 1-877-521-8600.

I am receiving replies from a survey I sent to participating voters in our 75th
district and am quite pleased at the number of responses and wide diversity of issues presented. For example: when asked who should decide on allowing smoking in public places, 76 percent said the business owner, 7 percent State of Kansas, 15 percent local government.

On the issue of building coal fired electric generating plants in western Kansas; 70 percent said yes, 24 percent said no, and 6 percent said they would if proper emission standards were enforced. Twenty percent of the respondents asked if nuclear generation was an option.

ON the limiting the amount of annual increase on your home, 96 percent favored a cap of 3 percent to 8 percent, unless extenuating circumstances were presented. Most complain it is not the valuation increase; it's the additional tax it cost because our taxing entities will not reduce the mill levy to keep income levels the same. Instead our friends at the schools, college, county, and city, find ways to spend the windfall.

My full survey report will soon be available on my Web site www.johngrange.net or call me and I will mail or e-mail you the report. I intend to send a copy to all who responded and provided a legible return address.

More than 5,400 students at the University of Kansas will receive about $26 million in privately funded scholarship support during the 07-08 academic year. This is a 10.6 percent increase from the previous year. This year's recipients represent 101 of the 105 counties in Kansas, 44 other states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 50 other countries.

The National Math and Science Initiative awarded KU a $2.4 million grant aimed at doubling the number of math and science teachers graduating annually to about 50.

Heading the list of legislative priorities for KU this session is a proposal to expand the School of Pharmacy. Working with policymakers and leaders in the pharmacy profession, a plan has been developed to nearly double the number of pharmacists graduating from KU.

The shortage of pharmacists is a problem that touches all areas of Kansas, although in many regions of the state it is much more acute than in others. There is a graduate of KU's School of Pharmacy in 95 of the 105 Kansas counties, but even that isn't enough to stem a growing shortage of pharmacists in the state.

I want to thank those that have called requesting information or assistance, and offering comments.

I hope I have been helpful to many of you and continue to solicit your requests.

I consider it an honor and privilege to be your representative in Topeka and I want to know what you think.

Contact me at grange@house.state.ks.us or johng@carlisleinc.net, my home 316-321-2087 or 1115 Rim Rock Road, El Dorado, KS 67042, or State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Ave, Room 411-S, Topeka, Kansas, 66612, 785-296-7655.
“Chasing Woodland Birds” is Talk of the Month program

Talk of the Month Club will meet Jan. 8, 2008 in the Mennonite Church dining hall. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m., followed by the program.

Bob Gress, Director of the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, will present a talk and slide show, “Chasing Woodland Birds”.

Bob has been photographing birds for publications for 30 years. A commitment to finish a new book, The Guide to Kansas Birds and Birding Hotspots, for the University Press of Kansas initiated a quest to photograph the elusive and colorful birds of the woodland canopy. His book will be available this spring.

Club members are invited to join Bob in greeting April migrants as they cross the Gulf of Mexico to land at High Island, Texas. In May, these migrants pass through Kansas. In June, we travel with Bob to visit the Boreal forests of northern Wisconsin to see warblers on the nesting grounds. Join us for this colorful look at warblers, buntings, vireos, tanagers, "robesaks, orioles and more.

New technologies in digital cameras, flashes and recordings have brought these birds of the shadows into focus.

Bob Gress is a graduate from Emporia State University with an M.S. in Environmental Biology. Bob and his wife, Mary Butel, enjoy traveling and photographing wildlife in wild places across the continent. Over 2,000 of his photos have been published and are seen in a wide variety of magazines and in more than twenty books, including Faces of the Great Plains, Kansas Wildlife, Watching Kansas Wildlife, The Smithsonian Book of North American Mammals and the Kaufman Focus Guide to Mammals of North America.

The Great Plains Nature Center opened to the public in 2000.

Any club member not able to attend should contact by noon on Saturday, Jan 5, either Mary Shay (532-2328), or Bonnie Eidem (532-1507). Any non-member who would like to attend this program should call one of these contacts.
Newton graduates sharing about travels

Nathan Stayrock Hobbs and Kendra Davis, both graduated in 2004 from Newton High School, have their sights set on new horizons.

Hobbs’ travels have taken him to the peaks of Alaska and the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Davis sought a change of pace from her University of Kansas studies to immerse herself in French in Senegal.

They will share photos and vignettes about their journeys on Friday at Prairie Harvest, 601 N. Main. Soup supper will be served at 6:30 p.m. with the presentation at 7 p.m. The program is free and open to the public.