

BONES AND BODYBUILDING

Kim Chastain talks on A&P and body building

Story and Photos by Savanna Benner
Multimedia Journalist

Tyler Junior College has strong, passionate teachers and Kim Chastain is no exception. Chastain, an A&P lab specialist, is compassionate for her students and has a special teaching philosophy.

"To explain things as simply as I can...they can learn this complicated material in an easy manner," Chastain said.

When Chastain informs her students about anatomy and physiology, she goes in depth about the bone structures, muscle groups, and, major organs. She offers a glimpse of what class is like as she grabbed a box and set it on the table. Then she opened it revealing the different shaped bones. She set them on the table where there were a few different shapes of the bones. There were small, long bones, long, skinny bones and small, circular bones that took up the long black lab table. She then explained A&P.

"We learn about the anatomy for the body and how it works. So, basically, learn all the parts and the structures and how they function," Chastain said.

Chastain has always had a heart for teaching biology. She is able to use her love for the subject to teach others and is motivated to teach her students. She teaches so her students want to listen to the lecture and not be bored and tired. Her students then use their knowledge from her to carry on in other classes to succeed in their major. Chastain has an important

motivation to keep her going and teaching lab.

"That would be my students. Because if they can learn, that creates a positive atmosphere for me to keep going. I love being around students. I love sharing my knowledge with them," Chastain said. "And I love seeing them have that 'AHA moment' where they actually get something. I have had students come back after they have been through a class with me, and they would say, "I really didn't understand everything, but when I got into my next A&P class, I remembered all the stuff you said, and it made a drastic difference in learning that material."

Chastain's students have expressed their respect and gratitude for their teacher. Through Chastain's teaching strategies, she can give her students a better understanding of A&P. Loving A&P helps her teach in a way it is easy to learn and experience the science of the body. Her students enjoy her teaching because Chastain uses a creative teaching approach.

"She is very knowledgeable, from my experience. She is just generally good at teaching. I haven't had any issues with her. She is really knowledgeable," Brady Burleson, Chastain's student and physical therapist assistant major, said.

Chastain is an inspiring teacher; she is also an ex-body builder. She did body building while she was in college. She loved body building and used the knowledge of the body, while she was in the body building class, for her now A&P professor job. Body building is a sport that uses all your muscles, which is similar to A&P where you learn about the body and how it works.

"When I was in college, I was a body builder. I did that at the amateur level for three years. So now it is really nice to be able to take that information and that activity that I did and apply it to teach muscles," Chastain said.

Chastain has always been passionate about biology and science. She has been at TJC for 10 years teaching about what she loves. Through the hard work she put in at Lamar University, she graduated with an undergraduate degree in psychology, and minor in biology and graduated in 1986 with a master's as well in educational administration. Chastain expressed that she was first looking to become a principal before a professor. After finding the A&P professor job, which



Kim Chastain, biology laboratory specialist is showing bones from the human body. Chastain was also involved in body-building when she was in college.

she was able to use her degree in, she knew she was going to be bossy since she wanted to be a principal.

"I have always had a passion for biology. My degree is actually in psychology and my minor is in biology. So, I have always taken anatomy classes and biology classes, and genetic classes in college. It was just always a fascination. So, to me, psychology and biology go hand in hand," Chastain said.

Although Chastain has always had a passion for biology, she first came here, 11 years ago, seeking a job as an assistant principal at a high school. No one was hiring, so she found TJC for a biology lab position, which was her minor in college.

"As an anatomy and physiology instructor, you provide students with the practical knowledge about a body part as well as the biological process that connect different systems within the bodies," according to an article, ZipRecruiter "What Do Anatomy and Physiology Instructors Do."

Chastain is a professor that not only teaches A&P, but also cares for her students being able to understand and comprehend what she is communicating to them. She wants to make her teaching interesting enough that her students remember what they learned and provide the knowledge to their future classes and employment.

"I try to transfer information over to students and help them learn to apply this all to real world actions and activities so that they can have some commonality with their patients," Chastain said. "It is really important that they can communicate appropriately and make people feel that you are approachable and that you can ask questions, which is what I try to do."



A bundle of bones being displayed on a table. These bones are used in lab classes at TJC.

Dave Funk: Art, ceramics and the honors program

Story and Photos by Marissa Kravek
Entertainment Editor

Fluorescent lights brighten the office as they create a warm glow. The coffee smell from the coffee bar is strong, but inviting. The room was calm and quiet, with a big table in the middle waiting to be used. This was the conference room in the honors lounge on the third floor of the Rogers Student Center where Dave Funk advises students. Funk is an artist, teacher and friend.

Funk holds many roles at TJC as the director of the honors program, and an adjunct professor in the art department who teaches a ceramics.

Funk said he has always loved art, but his love for ceramics started from a happy accident.

"I found it quite by accident," Funk said. Funk originally acquired a degree in graphic design, but realized he wasn't interested in it. He decided to take a summer ceramics class at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. His professors played a part in developing his love for ceramics.

"These guys are somebody, and it made me want to be better," Funk said. His teachers at the university he attended were famous in the ceramics world. He explains how the teachers made him want to work harder.

As for the honors program at TJC, there's many things Funk does for the honors students. He advises their class schedules,

helps with classes and more.

"Dave's role here is to support honors students in any way he can. That comes in the form of advising, building community, helping with classes and helping professors," Honors Coordinator, Dannika Blackhurst, said. Funk is responsible for interacting with the students and faculty.

"He gets hundreds of emails and calls a day, and he answers them all. He's here all day, every day; he's constantly busy. He also goes to tons of meetings," Honors Intern and Sophomore, Jayla Wroten, said.

Funk's job as the director of the Honors Program holds many responsibilities.

"Everything that my job entails is mostly to try and help students succeed in the Honors Program, and to help them however they need to be helped is the best way to say it. I don't try and make them fit the program, I try and make the program fit them, which requires a lot of flexibility," Funk said.

Something else to note about Funk is his impact on people.

"I'm a super go-getter perfectionist kind of person, and he is always making sure I'm focused on taking care of myself and doing things that are creative and restful," Blackhurst said. According to Blackhurst, Funk has significantly helped her work-life balance.

Funk doesn't just have an impact on the people he works with, but he also has an impact on his students. Wroten explains his impact on her.

"He's made my time at honors a lot more enjoyable. I don't think I would do any of the things I currently do like PTK or be an intern without Dave. He's really nice. He challenges me to succeed," Wroten said. Wroten, who has taken Funk's ceramics class, said Funk is her favorite professor.

While Funk has had an impression on TJC, the college has also had an impact on him. Funk has worked at TJC since 2009.

"The truest question is 'How hasn't it impacted my life for the better?' If I really think about it, the benefits have been profound. I cannot think of a way that my life here hasn't been positively impacted," Funk said. TJC has changed his life, Funk said.

Funk attends many events around campus whether those events are Phi Theta Kappa, honors events or school events.

"This place is great. For instance, my wife and son both love coming. We love to come to the events together here," Funk said.

Funk says more about why he loves working at TJC.

"I work with such great people. I'm sure other people have had this experience where your work is your work and your home life is your home life, and



A ceramics piece made by Funk. Funk has been doing ceramics since college.

you don't necessarily want those to mix because your work life isn't great. My work life here is fantastic, and I love the people I work with," Funk said. As the Honors Director, Funk works with many people.

Funk added some of his favorite memories at TJC, which includes awards, students and faculty.

"Once I was nominated for the Endowed Chair for Teaching Excellence Award, but I lost to Carrie Hobbs. I was never more glad to lose to somebody because she's amazing," Funk said. According to a tjc.edu/news article, "TJC employees recognized for outstanding service," the award is given to professors who demonstrate excellence as educators.

"I have now written dozens of letters of recommendation for people who have applied to medical schools, and major scholarships," Funk said.

Funk said helping students is one of his favorite parts of the job. He especially loves how he works with and helps the honors students.

"I love teaching, but I get to work with students in the honors program in such a way. We can occasionally connect past just what is the formal exchange of information, or me helping with advising," Funk said. Funk mentions he loves being an advocate for his students.

Funk mentions he loves being an advocate for his students. "He's able to do so much, and has continued to be such a cheerleader," Blackhurst said.

Funk had never heard about Tyler before coming here, and explained the moment when he knew he wanted to work here. Funk said it was meeting the art faculty and seeing the campus that made him realize he wanted to work at TJC.

"I've had a lot of great opportunities here. I know a lot of fantastic people. I've worked around some of the smartest people I've ever met, which I really love," Funk said.



Dave Funk has been working at TJC for more than 10 years. He started as an art professor.