



**November 2014**

## **Advocacy Teams Enter Competition Season**

The new [Austin College Advocacy Program](#) makes its official debut this month, as students head to tournaments near and far. Mock Trial and Mediation teams have a full docket--with cases to handle in Arizona, Texas, and Georgia.

In fact, the six-member Mock Trial team just returned from its first invitational contest held November 1-2 in Tucson. The University of Arizona hosted 30 mock court teams for the [7th Annual Great Sonoran Showdown](#). Austin College competed in four rounds against Pomona College, Gonzaga University, University of Arizona, and University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The 'Roos Mock Trial team not only took away significant new knowledge from this first major competition, but freshman Audrey Rose walked away with an individual witness award for her compelling role during defense rounds.

Victor Gutierrez de Pineres, Jr. '17, Richard McCutcheon '17, Ismael Reyna '18, Audrey Rose '18, Pranav Sheth '18, and Camilo Valencia '15 represented 'Roos in Arizona. Team members--with a variety of academic backgrounds such as communications, psychology, and political science--began working with team coach Michael Gunnin in the College's new courtroom at the beginning of fall semester.

"The Great Sonoran Showdown was a wonderful opportunity for our program to interact with elite, established programs," says Gunnin, director of special academic programming. "At the same time, it will help us prepare for later competitions."

For now, Mock Trial students are focusing on the [Baylor Green and Gold Invitational](#) November 14-16. Before they travel to Waco, the College's three-member Mediation Team--Zayra Acosta '16, Puja Desai '16, Saher Merchant '17--heads to the 15th Annual International Intercollegiate Mediation Tournament at Brenau University in Georgia, which runs November 6-8. The 'Roos will encounter teams from across the U. S., as well as Asia and Europe.

## **Peace Corps Event Celebrates New Program**

Three [Peace Corps](#) volunteers--Rachel Branaman '01 (Namibia), Jake Pritchard '10 (Nicaragua), and Kyle Floyd '06 (Nicaragua)--joined Helen Lowman '88 (Thailand), associate director for Peace Corps volunteer recruitment and selection, on the Austin College campus recently. (Current volunteer Kyle "Skyped in" from Managua, Nicaragua.) Together they helped celebrate this fall's launch of the [Peace Corps Prep Program](#) (PCPP) for 'Roos.

Austin College is now one of only a handful of colleges and universities in the United States to offer the PCPP, which aids students in acquiring necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer. Students can apply by working in cooperation with Dr. Patrick Duffey, PCPP coordinator at the College. The fall applications deadline is November 14.

While on the College campus, Lowman shared with Austin College President Marjorie Hass, students, and faculty information regarding the new easier and more effective means the Peace Corps uses to attract and select volunteers. Lowman also reflected on her own volunteer days, including her surprise after majoring in Spanish at Austin College and being accepted by the Peace Corps--then sent to Thailand. Today's applicants, she noted, have more input about where they serve and in what capacity.

## **Great Day of Service is Almost Here**

From morning to night Saturday, November 8, Austin College students will work across the region, assisting non-

profits on the Great Day of Service. Over the past five years, students have donated through the event over 6,000 hours of their time to various local agencies and organizations. Each year the student-run Service Station helps ensure that 'Roos uphold the College's commitment to serving others. This year students will help a wide range of groups--from the Denison Animal Welfare Group and Crisis Center Thrift Store to the Habitat for Humanity Warehouse and Grayson County Homeless Shelter.

## **The Chance To Give Back**

Academic enrichment through the Austin College Advocacy Program allows students to engage in "real world" experiences. They learn how to think creatively and analytically, plus put a new skills set into action. Friends and alumni help make experiential programs possible. Your gift of any size can make a difference. Simply go online: [www.austincollege.edu/giving](http://www.austincollege.edu/giving).