



***The annual Academic Honors Convocation was held Thursday, April 20 in Clifford J. Grum Sanctuary of Wynne Chapel. Dr. Julie Hempel and Dr. Patrick Duffey are shown here with Paola Paulin '25 and Jacqueline Barboza '25, recipients of the John Peyton and Mary Louise Shoap Fellowship for an Outstanding Student in Modern Languages. The complete list of recipients will be available soon on the Austin College website.***

## **2023 Baccalaureate and Commencement Ceremonies Set for May 19 & 20**

The Austin College Class of 2023 Commencement activities begin May 19 with the Baccalaureate Service at 7 p.m. in Clifford J. Grum Sanctuary in Wynne Chapel. Commencement Ceremonies will be Saturday, May 20 beginning at 8:30 a.m. for the graduates and their guests.

Baccalaureate speaker **Rev. Dr. Robyn Byrd Michalove** is the Associate Pastor for Mission and Family Ministries at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth, Texas where she has served since 2004.



Robyn is a graduate of Trinity University in San Antonio with a bachelor's in speech communication and Spanish. She earned her Master's of Divinity from Wake Forest University School of Divinity, and her Doctorate of Ministry from Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth.



**President Steven P. O'Day**, 16th president of Austin College, will deliver the Commencement Address. President O'Day describes his career in higher education as "being driven by a deeply held belief that we are called upon to personally educate and support the whole student—mind, body, and spirit."

President O'Day received his bachelor's degree in political science from Millersville University and a Juris Doctor degree from

Temple University School of Law. He also completed the Management Development Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Austin College in 2021.



**Deborah Crombie**, bestselling author and Austin College alumna from the Class of 1976, will receive an honorary degree at the Commencement ceremony. Crombie's undergraduate education in biology along with her affection for the United Kingdom combined to inspire her well-known mystery crime series featuring Detective Superintendent Duncan Kincaide and Sergeant Gemma James. Her most recent novel in the series, "A Killing of Innocents" was released in February 2023. Deborah lives in McKinney, Texas, where she enjoys

cooking and admiring her garden, reading, birdwatching, and playing with her dogs. She still travels to England several times a year.

[Commencement Details](#)

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***Austin College cheer team member Ben Washington '25 defies gravity on the beach in Daytona, Florida, following the team's history-making trip to NCA College National Championships. On April 11, the team performed well to finish sixth in the Intermediate Small Coed Division III competition. Follow @austincollegecheer on Instagram. Photo by Caitlyn Potraza '25***

[Read More](#) about Daytona!



## **Thayaril Earns NAEE Rising Researcher Award**

Dr. Ashley Thayaril '10, Austin College associate professor of economics and department chair for Economics & Business Administration, has been awarded the 2023 Rising Researcher Award from the National Association of Economic Educators (NAEE). The award was presented at the 2023 NAEE Spring Professional Development Conference hosted at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis on March 3.



The Rising Researcher Award was established by the NAEE to encourage and recognize outstanding contributions in economic education research at the advanced assistant professor or associate professor levels. Thayaril, who has been an Austin College faculty member since 2015 and was tenured in 2021, has focused her research and published works on financial literacy, financial risk tolerance, and financial education for high school students. She was also honored by the NAEE in 2019 with the Phil Saunders Best Economic Education Paper Award.

[Read More](#)

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# Join Us!

*Austin College Alumni invites you to join us at*

## **A Weekend in the Hill Country**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**May 5 & 6, 2023**

**Registration Required; See below.**

*Hosted by: Jana Harrison '89, Lance Haynes '92, Caitlin Larsen '10, Carl Money '88*

### **Information and Registration**

**Friday, May 5**

5 pm Wine Tasting [\$15]

6-8 pm Happy Hour

**Pontotoc Vineyard Weingarten**

**Saturday, May 6**

1-5 pm Light Bites

**The Vines at Fredericksburg**





### **PBK Chapter Initiates New Members & Welcomes Alumna Dr. Duff**



The Induction Ceremony for the 2023 Austin College Iota Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was held on April 14, in Mabee Hall in Wright Campus Center. Austin College alumna **Dr. Nancy Duff '73**, who is retired from Princeton Theological Seminary, was inducted as an honorary member of Austin College PBK. She delivered the keynote address, "Shakespeare vs. STEM: why a Liberal Arts Education Matters."

Duff said, "The invitation letter inviting me to be the 2023 Honorary Alumna Inductee and main speaker for Austin College's Iota Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was incredibly generous in its affirmations of my work as a scholar. It was an honor to be inducted alongside such highly qualified and worthy students."

Phi Beta Kappa is the nation's oldest, most prestigious undergraduate honors association. Austin College has had a PBK charter since 2001.

Regarding her return to campus, Duff said, "... for all the amazing physical changes that have occurred on the Austin College campus in the past 50 years, I am grateful that Austin College has maintained its commitment to being a small liberal arts college of high standing."

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***Following the 2023 Austin College Posey Leadership Award Convocation on April 13, recipient Sylvia Acevedo and special guests enjoyed lunch on Windsor Mall. Sylvia signed copies of her autobiography "Path to the Stars: My Journey from Girl Scout to Rocket Scientist" and visited with students, faculty and staff, and Austin College community friends.***

**PARENTS**

**ALUMNI**

**CALENDAR**



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