



## ***Welcoming the Holiday Season!*** **Lessons & Carols includes Alumni Readers**

Austin College rang in the 2023 holiday season with the Service of Lessons and Carols on November 30, in Clifford J. Grum Sanctuary of Wynne Chapel. The annual service, led by Chaplain John Williams '84, included Hebrew and Christian scriptures, carols, anthems, a candle-lighting ceremony, and performances by Austin College's A Cappella Choir, with soloist Luke Wild '24, and Chamber Orchestra.

As part of the year-long celebration of Austin College's 175th year, invited alumni have returned to campus for signature events such as Lessons & Carols. Rev. Shane Webb '07, of Woodhaven Presbyterian Church in Irving, Texas, Lillian Pappas '22, and Dr. Mari Elise Ewing '07 served as readers along with President Steven P. O'Day and students Kiara Bobb '24, Lee Campbell '25, Thomas Jolin '25, and Erica Moyo '27.

After the service, the group enjoyed refreshments on Windsor Mall where Student Body President Nia Carter '25 lit the Christmas tree.

### **[Video of 2023 Service of Lessons & Carols](#)**



## **Delegates Attend UN Climate Conference**

Austin College was granted official observer status as a research or educational institution at the 2023 United Nations Climate Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The delegation of eight students and two faculty members traveled to the international gathering





from November 28 through December 13. While at COP28, the students have presented video reports on Instagram; follow [@ac.climate](https://www.instagram.com/ac.climate).

The annual conference brings nations together to take action toward achieving the world's collective climate goals as prescribed under the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. The Austin College group has had access to watch the COP28 "Blue Zone" sessions, where heads of state and environmental ministers negotiate policy concerning various climate issues. Students visited the "Green Zone" where lobbyists, activists and exhibitors pitched their interests.

[LEARN MORE](#)



We're ending 2023 with thankful hearts and great expectations for a wonderful new year. You can help 'Roos shine this holiday season by making a gift to Austin College. We are celebrating 175 years of excellence and with your generosity, the next generation of 'Roos will add their light to an already bright future. [Give today](#) to support future 'Roos!



## Campus Holiday Schedule

**Campus offices will be closed for winter break** from Thursday, December 21 through Monday, January 1. The campus opens and January Term classes begin Tuesday, January 2. The Austin College Police Department will be on duty throughout the holiday, 24/7.



DR. KENNETH STREET  
**LAW SYMPOSIUM**  
AT AUSTIN COLLEGE

Save the Date!  
Thursday, February 22, 2024

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## *Cultivating a Community of Inclusion*

# Annual MLK Jr. Community Celebration Set



The public is invited to the **Martin Luther King Jr. Day Community Celebration** on Monday, January 15, at 11 a.m. in Ida Green Communication Center's Sally and Jim Nation Theatre. The annual event, hosted by Austin College, the Grayson County Rotary Club, and Sherman Rotary Club, will feature **keynote speaker Dr. Geré Feltus '01**, a physician and elected official of the McKinney City Council.

As an alumna, Feltus returns to speak at this signature event as part of the College's 175th year celebration. Yvan Konan '26 will serve as the student speaker, and Clemon White '24 and Dr. Lisa Brown will give a musical performance. For more information, contact [mkdavis@austincollege.edu](mailto:mkdavis@austincollege.edu).



## Annual Party Raises Funds for Nonprofits

Austin College Staff Council hosted the annual Staff & Faculty Holiday Party on December 6 in Wright Campus Center's Mabee Hall. The **'Roo-bilation** event featured music from the Band on Grand, holiday food, and prizes. Despite the clever Grinch theme, those in attendance—including many retired staff and faculty members—were very generous.

More than \$1000 was raised from raffle ticket sales and donations and were distributed to two local nonprofits— MasterKey Ministries, a nonprofit organization that provides food assistance



and education services, and Jack's Doghouse, a canine foster and transport service. Liz Washington, ACPD office coordinator, created many handcrafted centerpieces and ornaments that were shared with the guests. The 4' crocheted Grinch and Max (pictured here) have been donated to Abell Library and will be displayed there through the holiday.

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# Hop *into* History

**In the early 1890s** Austin College had three curricular tracks—preparatory, which was equivalent to high school; commercial, which stressed practical courses in writing and math but did not confer a degree; and finally collegiate. A collegiate-track student could earn an A.B. (bachelor of arts) with courses in the classics, Latin, Greek, English, philosophy, Spanish, rhetoric, and the emerging social sciences such as history, economics and government.

After finishing the A.B., students could also pursue post-graduate study at the college. Students could earn a degree in civil engineering by taking advanced courses in mathematics and science, or earn an A.M. (master of arts degree) by taking advanced courses in philosophy and social sciences. In those years, the College graduated between four and 10 students annually.

*Source: Austin College A Sesquicentennial History 1849-1999, by Dr. Light Townsend Cummins.*

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**MY STORY: EXPLORE. BELONG. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

**The 175th milestone theme *Explore. Belong. Make a Difference.* is the story arc of most students who call themselves 'Roos. They arrive here and begin their exploration; find belonging with like-minded peers; and answer the call to make a difference. Here are their stories—in their own words.**

## **Bek Urban '18**

*Ph.D. candidate in counseling psychology*

*Oklahoma State University*

*Stillwater, Oklahoma*

Along with my own coursework and dissertation work, I am also a therapist and undergraduate instructor in the pre-counseling minor at OSU. Additionally, I work for Equip as a research intern. Equip is a virtual eating disorder treatment program.





The service I'm involved in focuses on eating disorder treatment and access to care. I am an Albert Schweitzer Fellow in Tulsa, OK. The Schweitzer fellowship requires fellows to develop a project or plan to address health inequity in the Tulsa community. I have a partner for my project and our focus is on access to eating disorder support for uninsured and underinsured Oklahomans, with an emphasis on empowerment and connection to resources. Our goal is to help members of our community connect to support via our free groups, identify outside resources, understand social systems and inequities that drive health inequity, and become advocates for individual and systems-level changes in eating disorder care.

I am also part of the FEDUP collective, a group of trans, gender expansive, and intersex people who believe eating disorders are social justice issues. We work to train eating disorder professionals in affirming care and provide direct peer support to people in the trans and intersex communities.

Austin College prepared me for my work in so many ways! AC allowed me to pursue all of my passions (hence the triple major) and to learn from so many different schools of thought. The liberal arts orientation of AC also put me in classrooms with people from multiple disciplines and helped me hone my ability to communicate what I care about in ways that people outside my field can understand and connect with. This is helpful when meeting with people about research, when writing grants to fund my studies, and in my interdisciplinary fellowship cohort. In my fellowship cohort, we have people from PhD programs in multiple fields, from med school and from law school. Knowing how to navigate discussions with people who are trained in different schools of thought helps me understand others and have more enriching conversations to connect the work we're all doing.

All in all, AC helped me learn to connect with others, value service in a culturally humble way, and taught me how what we do for each individual can help change the world around us. I'm forever thankful for my time at AC!



**Nicole Mittenfelner Carl '06**

*Affiliated Faculty, Graduate School of Education  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

I am the director of the Urban Teaching Residency Program, the program I went through at Penn to earn my teaching certification when I first came to Philadelphia in 2006.

I teach courses about qualitative research and urban education, and I mentor and advise approximately 40 master's students a year. My goal is to cultivate and retain excellent, student-centered teachers in Philadelphia. Not all of the students who go through my program remain in Philadelphia, and I have just developed a fully online master's program in urban education, so now I am working with educators throughout the country. Regardless of where my students teach, I hope to help them develop an approach to students and families that is asset based and to cultivate a social justice approach to teaching and learning that is anti-racist and based on

relationships.

Volunteering at the Austin College Saturday school and being an ACTivator definitely prepared me for my career as a teacher. I was a chapel intern during my senior year at AC, and I was an ACTivator all four years. I ran weekend camps for children and youth during my time with the ACTivators, and having fun with youth in structured ways to get them to think critically was such a formative experience in my approach to teaching and life. I was also part of the Leadership Institute at Austin College, which served me well in my role as a program director now (and when I got my doctorate from University of Pennsylvania in Educational Leadership). The professors I met in my very first semester as a part of the Leadership Institute, including Dr. Shelly Williams, shaped how I approach teaching and leadership. I also was in Model UN during my time at AC, and while I am not in politics, the skills of reading and making sense of thousands of pages of information so that you can communicate them with others also has served me well. Finally, I was a Mellon Fellow supervised by Dr. Roger Platizky. This research changed my life. I developed a deep love and appreciation for qualitative research that have influenced the three textbooks I have written about qualitative research. Roger is also an inspiration for the way that I mentor the graduate students who work with me at the University of Pennsylvania.

**PARENTS**

**ALUMNI**



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