

Building Bridges

[Photo: Dr. Farmer.jpg] **5/20/19** — A bridge is defined as a structure that provides passage over obstacles. Prior to the invention of mortar, early bridges were crude structures built from local natural resources. Rains would damage, and floods would destroy these primitive bridges. It was not until the ancient Romans learned to make mortar out of volcanic rocks that larger, high quality bridges were constructed. The construction of these new bridges and the roads that connected them transformed the world. The Roman Empire spread across Europe, and through sections of Asia and Africa. Violence and warfare followed, but so did the rapid spread of culture and civilization. Later in history, Roman bridges were replaced by iron, steel, and suspension bridges. Like the earlier Roman bridges, modern bridges increased travel, supported business and industry, and facilitated growth.

Bridges can also be ornate objects of beauty. The Pont Marie Bridge which spans the Seine River in Paris is one of my personal favorites . . . as is Weatherford College. The Weatherford College bridge provides passage to a better life. For 150 years Weatherford College has been providing students with the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skill sets that lead to both family sustaining jobs and personal fulfillment. For some that means acquiring workforce training that leads to immediate employment. For others it means earning an associate of arts degree before employment. For still others, it means earning transfer credit for advanced degrees. Bridges to opportunity exist at Weatherford College at multiple levels for a wide range of career seekers. Students use the Weatherford College bridge to navigate over obstacles and acquire a quality education at a reasonable price.

Weatherford College has been very active in strengthening and expanding old bridges, while simultaneously building new bridges. Through relationship building activities and formal institutional partnerships, existing relationships with K-12 school systems have been strengthened and expanded. Dual credit programs allow high school students to take college courses. Three new school systems have been added to the WC dual credit program, and enrollment is at an all-time high. During our May commencement ceremonies it was announced that fourteen dual credit students from various districts graduated with college degrees prior to graduating from high school. A vibrant dual credit program serves as a bridge from high school to college.

Bridges are also being built to university partners. In addition to the longstanding partnerships with regional universities, Weatherford College is now building bridges to private universities and flagship state institutions. On May 28th at 1:00 p.m., President Eric I. Bruntmyer will be bringing a leadership team from Hardin-Simmons University to Weatherford College to sign a formal articulation agreement. This means that WC students will now be able to seamlessly transfer to Hardin-Simmons without losing any credit. Another bridge is being built with the new School of Engineering at Tarleton State University. This bridge will allow WC engineering students to take courses taught by the Tarleton Dean of Engineering here on the Weatherford College campus. They will then finish their degrees at Tarleton without losing credit, and as recent graduates, former students will cross employment bridges to Lockheed Martin, Bell Helicopter, and to some of our growing Parker County engineering firms. These university bridges will both help our students earn valuable degrees, and help our area businesses by providing a highly qualified labor pool.

Ultimately, our Weatherford College bridges serve to connect students' dreams to reality. Our bridges provide passage over obstacles and allow students to travel to bright new destinations. Jim Rohn said,

“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.” Through hard work, these beautiful bridges transform hope to reality, and allow students to actualize daring dreams of excellence. As we reflect on our rich 150 year institutional history, Weatherford College will become increasingly forward thinking and will continue to build bridges to an ever brighter future. We will provide passage over obstacles, and transform hope to reality.

Tod Allen Farmer
President, Weatherford College