



# Eastern-in-the-News



## SHIRLEY MURPHY TAKES ON NEW CHALLENGES AS FULLTIME BUSINESS FACULTY AT EASTERN

Moorefield – Dec. 4, 2012 — As the nation continues to climb its way up from the hardest of economic times, and as commerce and jobs begin to revive, students generally seem to be keeping the faith in Business as a sound career choice. According to a study released this past October by the US Census Bureau, some 20-percent of all undergraduates are choosing Business as their primary field of study, making it the most popular major among the nation's college-goers.

That trend has also emerged at one local college, where nearly one-quarter of all students take business or business-related courses. And Eastern WV Community and Technical College has responded by recently naming a new fulltime faculty member in the subject. Although Shirley Murphy, of Keyser, just started as a fulltime instructor at Eastern this fall semester, she has taught business and other courses part-time at the Potomac Highlands school for more than eight years.

"Shirley has taught so many students and classes at Eastern since 2004 that last spring she received her five-year equivalence service pin," said Seyed Mirkhani, Eastern's academic program manager for business technologies, and Murphy's direct supervisor.



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"She is well-liked by students, and has given a great boost to our retention efforts. And as our 2013 spring registration continues on through January 11, we expect to see many new Business students in that mix."

### **Preparing For Changes**

Currently, Murphy teaches about 60 students at Eastern, in courses that include Accounting, Business, Macroeconomics, WORD processing software and Computer Fundamentals.

"Students are aware of economic changes that the country is going through," Murphy noted, "and they realize that to secure their future for job potential, it's very important to have a knowledge of business and how it functions, and how changes are making business function differently than before, so they can be prepared."

Murphy has also begun to work with Mirkhani to develop and promote Eastern's Entrepreneurship Incubator, an array of assets and equipment brought together at the college

— for student and community benefit — to assist startup companies and small businesses within Eastern’s six-county district.

“We are excited that Shirley is bringing her deep experience into active involvement with our entrepreneurship program,” said Mirkhani.

“I’m looking to bring more interest into the overall concept of entrepreneurship to our student population and to increasing enrollment in our Entrepreneurship course at Eastern,” she said. “I try to do that through all of the courses I teach, because entrepreneurship is a chance for some students who may have really bright ideas — and who aren’t sure and may think they can never achieve their goals or dreams.

#### **Local Business Opportunities**

“But by gaining knowledge,” Murphy said, “they’ll see that there are places and people who can help you go about having your own business.”

For the community, the Incubator team is working on plans to invite local business owners to sit in on particular Eastern classes that might hold a specific interest for them. “I might be lecturing, say, on human resource management — how to manage those more effectively — or on the overall development of a business.

“So this kind of opportunity would allow current business owners to come in and explore whatever aspects about business that might interest them.”

The Incubator resource is also considering how best to make surveys to find out what subject areas would be of most interest to local business owners, “and then offer various speakers to talk on those subjects,” Murphy said, “so they can see what Eastern can and does offer, not only to fulltime students, but also to current businesses operating in the area.” And depending on interest, through its Workforce Education Department the college could offer short-term modules or seminars for community business owners.

“The economy has changed so much, and people who are in business at this time need to know — as do we, as individuals — how to manage better,” Murphy pointed out. “You need to be very effective with management skills, and note the changes that are taking place, to be ready for the changes and challenges that the future is presenting.

#### **Real World Knowledge**

“Because the individuals who are prepared and ready to take action are going to survive,” she emphasized, “while those who are waiting might miss the boat.”

In addition to her teaching at Eastern, for many years Murphy has taught business and computer classes at Potomac State College and Marshall University. And though she holds two associate degrees in business from Allegany College, as well as both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in business from Frostburg State University, her knowledge of the field comes as much from real world experience as from the classroom.

Nine years of management experience for two transportation companies, for example, led to her appointment as director of human resources at one, and as safety and compliance officer at the other. She also worked one year for the U.S. treasury office, as consultant to a bankruptcy court, assisting the trustee in the closure of a transportation company going through bankruptcy.

During 16 years as a free-lance writer and research assistant for a Frostburg professor, she has put together instructor’s manuals and created exam question banks. And she has nearly two decades of experience as a geriatric nurse for a private nursing home in Maryland.

A former member of the Society for the Advancement of Management, and a member of both Phi Beta Kappa and the American Professional Nursing Society, Murphy is a lifelong resident of West Virginia who “did move away for a while and then came back, because I love this area.” And this fall, her new job at Eastern has fulfilled a life goal.

“Being a fulltime instructor is the dream of a lifetime for me, and it provides me the opportunity to touch lives in ways that most people don't ever have the opportunity to do. “It's such a pleasure to watch the sharing of knowledge,” Murphy said, “and to see the faces light up, and you know that you have conveyed it right, and they’ve got it — and to have everyone walk away from the situation a little smarter, whether it be about humanity in general or about business.

“I spent years stuffing my head with knowledge and information and ideas. And now to have an outlet,” Murphy pointed out, “and people who want to learn, is truly the greatest honor that one individual could ever ask.”