

NOC hosts Presidential Investiture

Diana Morris Watkins' Northern Oklahoma College presidency was made official as the 15th President for NOC.

Watkins has served as president since May 2024 when she was appointed president by NOC regents but Tuesday, she was officially inaugurated as the NOC president with an investiture ceremony at the Kinzer Performing Arts Center on the Tonkawa campus.

Watkins explained her vision for NOC in her presidential address.

"When I met with the NOC Board of Regents about the possibility of continuing to serve as president beyond the interim period, she said. "I presented them with a document that outlined my vision for the future of Northern Oklahoma College, building on previous successes of the college and pointing to a pathway for future successes. I broke apart our mission statement and outlined what I thought it truly meant for this institution and for my role as president, confident that if given the opportunity I could lead our extremely capable executive team as we take a look at our processes and procedures searching for ways to create the most efficient and effective path forward for our students."

"I think it's pretty cool to have spent the past twenty years of my life working at the state's first public community college," she added. "Its

rich history is beautifully showcased in the AD Buck museum. I'm also excited for all of you to get a chance to see that some of the rich history showcased through stories of our outstanding alumni which are displayed here in the hallways of the Kinzer Performing Arts Center as Faces of NOC and through the Distinguished Alumni showcased out front in the Eleanor Hayes Gallery."

"Being a multi-campus institution allows us to provide some unique programming in different areas," she said. "As your President, I pledged to have a regular presence on each of NOC's three campuses and in each of the four communities where we offer coursework. I hope those of you who are active in the Tonkawa, Enid, Stillwater and Ponca City communities have already recognized that is a priority for me. The partnerships with the local chambers in these communities, with workforce and economic development leaders, with Autry, Meridian, and Pioneer Technology Centers, with the University Center in Ponca City, Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, and Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Enid are vitally important to the successes of Northern Oklahoma College, and I will continue to foster relationships with each of those groups throughout my tenure."

"Providing "high-quality, accessible and afford-



Diana Morris Watkins (right) receives the NOC Presidential Medallion from NOC President Emeritus Dr. Cheryl Evans while NOC President Emeritus Dr. Joe Kinzer (left) and the board of regents look on at Watkins' Presidential Investiture on Tuesday. (photo by Shiloh Martin/Northern Oklahoma College).

able educational opportunities and services" requires a strong emphasis on professional development and a strong focus on continuous improvement," she said. "Accessibility is a

current strength for NOC through online and Online live course offerings but we can improve

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Watkins

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how we serve students with diverse needs. replicated in other communities and are currently working to create in more.”

NOC President’s Emeritus Dr. Cheryl Evans and Dr. Joe Kinzer and the NOC Board of Regents presented the Symbols of the Office to Watkins.

In introducing Watkins, Dr. Evans said she asked those that worked her to sum her up in one word.

Those descriptive words for Watkins include “driven, authentic, optimistic, visionary, energetic, smart, engaged, witty, approachable, capable, genuine, rational, objective, passionate, purpose-driven, wise, astute, sharp, and resilient.”

“These words describe the impact that she has already made on the NOC community and what kind of a team player she is,” Evans said.

Tonkawa’s Kevin Ditmore and Enid’s Bert

Mackie each spoke about the Tonkawa and Enid communities and NOC’s value in those communities.

Dennis Casey, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, spoke regarding NOC’s mission in the education community.

T. L. Walker, the Executive Director of Standing Bear Foundation and the Northern Oklahoma College Tribal Institute, gave Watkins a Native American Blessing.

The NOC Choir and Concert Band performed the Pledge of Allegiance, ‘For Good, and the NOC Alma Mater.

The event was followed by a reception at the Renfro Center.

Watkins served NOC as a language arts instructor at NOC Stillwater, later as the Vice President for NOC Stillwater, and then as Vice President for Academic Affairs before taking over as interim president in January 2024.



President Diana Watkins and Board of Regent Chairman Jason Turnbow

ELEANOR HAYS ART GALLERY

Kinzer Performing Arts Center, NOC Tonkawa

Legacies
of Change

featuring
Faces of NOC and NOC Distinguished Alumni

January 14
through
March 9,
2025

VIEWING HOURS: 1-5 PM,
MONDAY - FRIDAY,
AND DURING PERFORMANCES



Over 50,000 square feet of murals were dedication on Dec. 11 at the NOC Tonkawa Cultural Engagement Center. The murals, commissioned by Hugh Pickens, were created by Yatika Starr Fields. Pictured (L-R): NOC President Emeritus Dr. Cheryl Evans, Yatika Starr Fields, Hugh Pickens, NOC President Diana Morris Watkins, Vice President for Development and Community Relations Sheri Snyder. (Photo by Shiloh Martin/Northern Oklahoma College)

NOC dedicates Fields' murals

Three sets of murals, created by Osage artist Yatika Starr Fields, were dedicated Wednesday at Northern Oklahoma College Tonkawa's Cultural Engagement Center.

The murals, located in the CEC and the Pickens Learning Commons, encompass over 5,000 square feet.

Fields was commissioned by Hugh Pickens to create the murals as part of the existing art collection in the Pickens Learning Commons in the Vineyard Library Administration Building.

In introducing Fields, Pickens said, "Our vision was for Yatika to create something that was immersive, something that had art on all sides and I think we accomplished that today. Yatika has the ability as an artist to see beyond the present, access spiritual realms through visions that undertake long journeys."

Fields started by thanking NOC and the relationship that has developed over the years

(See **Mural** on Page 3)

Northern Encounter

Spring 2025

A day for high school juniors, seniors and their parents to get an up-close look at what Northern has to offer.

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STILLWATER	TONKAWA	ENID
January 15	January 22	February 5
NOC Stillwater Building	Renfro Center	Gantz Student Center
9:00-11:30 am	9:00-11:30 am	9:00-11:30 am
580.628.6904	580.628.6668	580.548.2353

Pre-Register Online Now:
<https://noc.tfaforms.net/217784>
or scan code

Mural

(Continued from Page 3)

with President Emeritus Dr. Cheryl Evans and current President Diana Morris Watkins, Sheri Snyder and Hugh Pickens.

"This was a collaboration of individuals who appreciate art with a unique vision and I'm glad we crossed paths to do that because it created and enabled a place to educate," Fields said. "This can be a place to nurture creativity through envisioning a new future. That's what this college has done over its history."

"In the three years of this project, I have learned so much about NOC and the Tonkawa community as well as the Ponca Nation and Tonkawa Nation," he said.

He also took time to describe the murals and how the history of NOC played a part in the symbols included in the murals.

Sheri Snyder, Vice President for Development and Community Relations, emceed the program.

"Today is a continuation of a wonderful partnership we (NOC) have had with Mr. Hugh Pickens and the Doctor Pickens Museum, Inc., which started in 2020 under the presidential leadership of Dr. Cheryl Evans, when Hugh (Pickens) commissioned the beautiful 50-foot murals painted by Yatika here in our Cultural Engagement Center," Snyder said.

Snyder added that In April 2022, NOC administration presented the vision of the Tonkawa Library and new contemporary Student Learning Commons to the Northern Oklahoma College Board of Regents, where they not only approved the project, but also approved the naming of the facility "The Pickens Learning Commons" thanks to the substantial support from the Doctor Pickens Museum, Inc. In June, the contract was renewed between the College and the Pickens Museum and Hugh commissioned the two stunning murals total-

ing 100'x20' by Yatika. Additionally, there are over 80 pieces of artwork in the Pickens Learning Commons, which makes it one of the most significant art collections on display in northern Oklahoma.

"This leads us to the present time under President Diana Morris Watkins leadership – This past summer, Mr. Pickens and Yatika sat down with us to discuss the potential of creating the third set of murals in the CEC along the West wall expanding 32 feet long and 14 feet high and the South wall expanding 46 feet long by 5 feet high," Snyder said. "Today we dedicate the completion of murals project. In total, all three sets of murals encompass over 5,000 square feet."

"What an exciting day for NOC," said president Diana Morris Watkins. "How blessed are we to have friends like Hugh Pickens who support the cultural life of the college? When he approached Sheri (Snyder) and me about once again bringing in the incredibly talented artist Yatika Starr Fields, we, of course, quickly jumped on that opportunity. The Pickens Learning Commons and the Cultural Engagement Center provide our campus community with museum quality experiences right here in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, and we are grateful for friends like Mr. Pickens who generously assist in providing high-quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities for NOC students."

The latest murals make a total of six in the library and Cultural Engagement Center on the NOC Tonkawa campus.

The murals may be viewed during regular business hours.

Pickens is the president of the Pickens Art Museum in Ponca City.



Northern Oklahoma College, Enid Campus Blood Drive

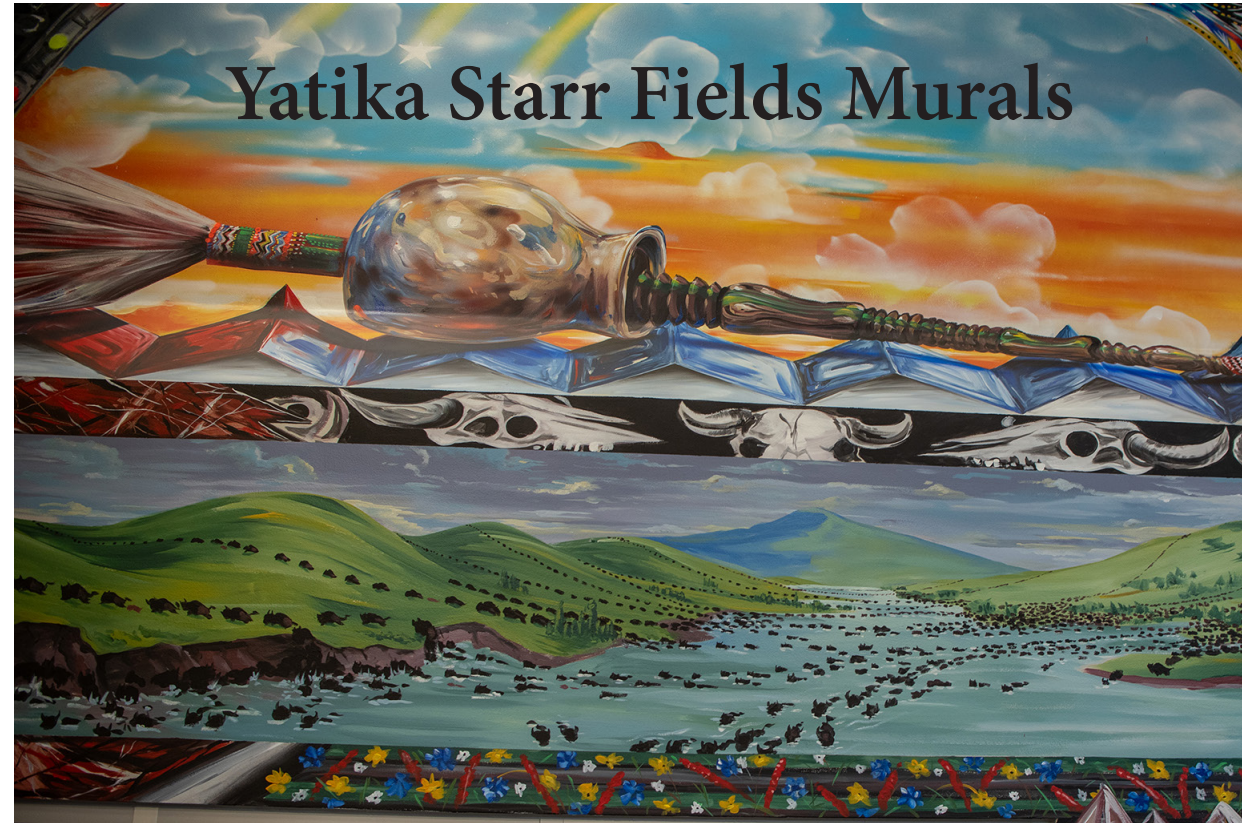
**Tuesday, January 28
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Gantz Center - Ballroom

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877-340-8777, or visit obi.org.**

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for donating blood!***





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NOC Calendar

Jan. 18

Away Lady Mavs Wrestling at York (NE)
Open, 9 a.m.

Jan. 20

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, No Classes/
Offices Closed
Home Mavs and Lady Mavs Basketball vs.
Connors, 5:30 p.m./7:30 p.m.
Home Jets and Lady Jets Basketball vs. Murray,
5:30 p.m./7:30p.m.

Jan. 21

Free Lunch, BCM, 11:15 a.m. – 1 p.m.,
Tonkawa
Karaoke, Gantz Center, 7 p.m., Enid
The Gathering, BCM, 7 p.m., Enid
Pizza, Pool, Air Hickey, Student Union, 7:30
p.m., Tonkawa

Jan. 22

Northern Encounter, Renfro Center, 9 a.m. –
11 a.m., Tonkawa
Free Lunch, Wesley House, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.,
Tonkawa
Free BCM Lunch, Gantz Center, 11:30 a.m. – 1
p.m., Enid
The Gathering, BCM, 7:30 p.m., Tonkawa

Jan. 23

North Country Invitational Basketball
Tournament, Foster-Piper Fieldhouse, 4 p.m.
Away Jets and Lady Jets Basketball vs.
Connors, 5:30 p.m./7:30 p.m.

Jan. 24

Final Day to Drop Courses with Full Refund
North Country Invitational Basketball
Tournament, Foster-Piper Fieldhouse, 4 p.m.



NOC Tonkawa Blood Drive

Thursday, January 30
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Student Union

Get community service hours for donating blood!

January NOC Birthdays



Jan. 17	Kyle Parmley	Jan. 28	Karri Morrill
Jan. 23	Janet Hartz	Jan. 29	Malik Owdetallah
Jan. 25	Madison Prince	Jan. 30	Bridget Napoli
Jan. 27	Lindsey Copley	Jan. 30	Alene Pitts
Jan. 28	Valarie Wade	Jan. 31	Audrey Schmitz

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your appointment!**



Board of Regents approve policies, academic fee changes

The Northern Oklahoma College Board of Regents approved two policies and a number of academic fee requests at their December meeting Wednesday at NOC Tonkawa.

The two policies are both related to the NOC website, one is a privacy policy and the other a policy regarding cookies. Vice President for Development & Community Relations Sheri Snyder said the policies were necessary updates for the current NOC website. NOC is in current development of a new website that will be unveiled in 2025.

Regarding the FY2026 Academic Service Fees request, Vice President for Financial Affairs Anita Simpson explained the 12 fees under consideration. Some were slight increases to current academic service fees in nursing and fine arts while others were dropped altogether.

Simpson also presented the financial report, approved by the regents. She also explained two purchases of more than \$25,000.00. They included a Boiler System for the Foster-Piper Fieldhouse in Tonkawa at a cost of \$26,540.00 and an Academic Research Data Base for all campuses at a cost of \$28,764.19.

In administrator updates, Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Shelly Mencacci reported that NOC received a \$94,000 NASA Grant that will provide funding for earth science research. She thanked Dr. Frankie Wood-Black, Division Chair for Engineering, Physical Science, and Process Technology, for her efforts to secure the grant.

Vice President Snyder reminded the regents

of the investiture for president Diana Morris Watkins set for Tuesday, Jan. 14 at the Kinzer Performing Arts Center in Tonkawa. Formal invitations highlighting the event will go out next week.

Vice President for Enid Jeremy Hise reported that over 200 Enid students performed over 300 hours of community service at the Enid Day of Kindness. He said each athletic program as well as the science program participated in the event.

Dr. Rick Edgington, Vice President for Enrollment Management, reported that Fall Enrollment concluded with a 1% increase in student enrollment and a 5% increase in credit hour production. Over Fall 2023. He said the preliminary spring enrollment shows an increase of 12% in head count and 10% in credit hour production compared to Spring 2024.

Vice President Simpson reported that she met with NOC Division Chairs and compared NOC instructor wage and benefit packages to other like Oklahoma institutions. She said that NOC was in the top two of comparable schools for salaries and was at the top in fringe benefits.

In the president's report, Watkins said there have been meetings with Oklahoma State University regarding NOC's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OSU for the Gateway Program and that those discussions are moving along nicely.

The next meeting is Wednesday, Feb. 19, in the President's Conference Room at NOC Tonkawa at 2 p.m.



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The Ponca City Rotary Club and Northern Oklahoma College presented dictionaries to every TES 3rd grade student on Dec. 12.

NOC, Ponca City Rotary donate dictionaries at TES

Northern Oklahoma College and the Ponca City Rotary Club partnered to provide dictionaries for each 3rd grade student at Tonkawa Elementary School.

Tonkawa Police Officer Darrell Mendiola represented the Ponca City Rotary Club and Director of Marketing Rachel Kirk represented

Northern Oklahoma College for the presentation at the Tonkawa Elementary Library.

Mendiola said the Ponca City Rotary Club worked with various local sponsors to purchase dictionaries for each 3rd grade student in Kay County.

The dictionaries were presented Dec. 12.



NOC Division Chairs getting ramped up for the 2025 Spring Semester.



NOC Student Art of the Week

Myra Mehojah, Art Major, Ponca City, OK. “Tankard Set” Stoneware with stain and glaze (above) and Anna Jones, Art Major, Medford, OK “Relax” Stoneware with iron oxide stain. (left)