

Former governor to speak at NOC commencement

Former Oklahoma Governor George Nigh will address candidates for graduation at the Northern Oklahoma College 2025 commencement exercises Saturday, May 3.

NOC Tonkawa candidates will march into Foster-Piper Fieldhouse on the Tonkawa campus at 9:30 a.m. on May 3.

That same day NOC Enid and Stillwater candidates will enter Briggs Auditorium on the Enid campus at 2:30 p.m.

Pinning ceremonies for graduates from the NOC nursing program will take place at 7 p.m. on May 2 in the Kinzer Performing Arts Center in Tonkawa.

“The NOC family is so excited to celebrate the

academic accomplishments of these students,” said NOC President Diana Morris Watkins. “As a life-long Oklahoman, I’m thrilled for our students to have the opportunity to hear from Governor Nigh as they set forth on the next leg of their journey, whether that is a continuation of their academic career or an entrance into the Oklahoma work force.”

Nigh served as governor four times, first serving as the Oklahoma governor in 1963 serving an unexpired term and then later serving a second unexpired term in 1979. He then served two full terms from 1979-1987.

While a senior at East Central University in 1950, Nigh gave his first commencement

speech to an 8th grade class in Pittsburgh County in 1950. Since then, Nigh has never missed a year giving a commencement address now counting 76 straight years. He has given over 250 commencement speeches.

Nigh, a native of McAlester, Oklahoma, graduated from McAlester High School. After serving in the United States Navy, Nigh attended Eastern Oklahoma A & M College, now known as Eastern Oklahoma State College. He then graduated from East Central State College in Ada, Oklahoma in 1950. From 1951 to 1959, he alternated between service in the Oklahoma House of Representatives, and as a teacher in the McAlester public schools.

During his tenure in the state legislature, he introduced legislation designating “Oklahoma!” as the state song. He served as lieutenant governor of Oklahoma from 1959 to 1963. Taking office at age 31, he became the youngest state lieutenant governor in the United States.

In 1963, Nigh was sworn in as the 17th governor of Oklahoma for nine days, filling an unexpired term. He later served five days in 1979, serving another unexpired term. 1978, he was elected Oklahoma’s 22nd governor serving from 1979-1987.

He later served as the president of the University of Central Oklahoma from 1992-1997. He also is an Oklahoma Hall of Fame Inductee



George Nigh

receiving that honor in 1989.

The Nigh University Student Center at UCO was named in honor of George and his wife, Donna.

George and Donna Nigh also founded the George and Donna Nigh Leadership Academy held yearly in Oklahoma City for students planning a career in public service.

Students may still file an application for graduation

Students can still file an application for spring graduation.

Filing the application does not cost anything and does not obligate students to participate in graduation. NOC does ask that students file to have your name included in the commencement program and other programs related to completion of your degree.

Graduation is set for May 3.

If you are planning to participate in graduation, please monitor this website for all of the latest information: <https://www.noc.edu/students/current-students/graduation/>.

KPAC auditorium to be renamed in honor of Dineo Heilmann

The auditorium of the Kinzer Performing Arts Center will be renamed the “Dineo Heilmann Auditorium” at a dedication ceremony Wednesday, April 23 at Northern Oklahoma College.

The dedication is scheduled for 12:30 p.m.

Heilmann was an instructor at NOC from 1986-2017, serving as the NOC Fine Arts Division Chair from 1990-2017.

NOC President Diana Morris Watkins said Heilmann is very deserving of the honor.

“Countless students have been impacted by Dineo Heilmann’s work at Northern Oklahoma College, and as someone who was once a trombone player in the NOC Junior High Honor Band, I count myself among them,” she said. “When I later became his colleague, I had the opportunity to witness the many ways his leadership, dedication, and insight contributed to the continued success of the Roustabouts and other students in the Fine Arts Division.

He received his Associate degree from Northern Oklahoma College, his Bachelor of Music Education from Oklahoma State University where he was named Outstanding Music Student his senior year. He then received a fellowship to complete his Master of Music Education degree at Wichita State University.

He was named 1991’s Outstanding Young Bandmaster for the state of Oklahoma by Phi Beta Mu. He has had the honor of working with famed conductor Eugene Corporon, renowned composer Jack Stamp and has performed in a master class for Richard Stoltzman.

Heilmann has been honored twice by the Northern Oklahoma College board of Regents, the first with a “Resolution” of outstanding contribution to music culture and the second he was honored along with his father with a “Resolution” for the 50th anniversary of the Roust-

abouts for “50 years of inspiring performances”.

In 2014, the city of Tonkawa named him “Citizen of the Year.” In 2015 Tonkawa High School named Mr. Heilmann as “Friends of Education” for raising money to purchase a Steinway grand piano for their Events Center.

He appeared annually with the Northern Gala Orchestra since its inception in 1996, under the baton of Conductor Gerald Steichen, performing traditional clarinet literature. Dineo has been so lucky as to have performed with New York Philharmonic Violist Dorian Rence and such soprano artists as Loraine Ernst, Julie McCoy, and Janet Gray.

In 2000 he participated in the Higher Education Leadership Academy.

He has served as the representative for Junior/Community Colleges for the Oklahoma Association of Schools of Music. He has been a member of the Music Educators National Conference, Oklahoma Music Educators Association, and Phi Beta Mu.

Heilmann, Class of Northern Oklahoma College 1982, was recently inducted into the NOC Distinguished Alumni.



Dineo Heilmann



Life changing.

NORTHERN OKLAHOMA COLLEGE
ANNUAL STUDENT ART EXHIBITION

APRIL 15 | MAY 6, 2025

Dreamscapes

Featured Artists
Ariel Calvert
Leslee Richardson

MEET THE ARTISTS RECEPTION
SATURDAY, APRIL 19 | 2-3 PM

KINZER PERFORMING ARTS CENTER | ELEANOR HAYS ART GALLERY
Viewing Hours: 1-5 pm, Monday-Friday and during performances

PTech team in Texas skills event

Northern Oklahoma College Process Technology has qualified for the NAPTA Troubleshooting Skills Competition in Pasadena, Texas.

The competition is set for April 24-25 at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology on the San Jacinto College Central Campus in Pasadena, Texas.

The NOC contingent is called Team Molecule Management Mavericks.

Team members for the Molecule Management Mavericks include Mark Goddard (coach), Conner Propst, Pryor, Oklahoma; Jude Stow, Tonkawa, Oklahoma; Donnie Combrink, Ponca City, Oklahoma; and Jayton Tautfest, Lamont, Oklahoma.

The North American Process Technology Al-

liance's Troubleshooting Skills Competition (TSC) was created as a venue for advanced Process Technology students to demonstrate hands-on skills in real-time process problem solving.

Troubleshooting skills are necessary for developing a highly competent petrochemical workforce in the U.S., maintaining consistent high-quality production, and contributing to the security, safety, and regulatory compliance of our facilities.

This signature event pits the best student teams from educational institutions across the country in a competition for the title "NAPTA Troubleshooting Champions."

Tonkawa hosts Interscholastic meet

Students from 10 area schools participated in the Northern Oklahoma College Tonkawa Interscholastic Contest April 5.

Participating schools included Billings High School, Covington-Douglas High School, Deer Creek-Lamont High School, Drummond High School Hennessey High School, Pioneer-Pleasant Vale High School, St. Mary's Catholic School, Stillwater Junior High, Tonkawa High School, and Woodland High School.

According to Cara Beth Johnson, NOC Business Division Chair, 245 exams were adminis-

tered in 30 different testing areas.

Medals were presented for first, second, and third place to students in each contest.

Junior and senior students placing first through third place received \$150, \$100 and \$50 scholarships, respectively.

Certificates of merit were awarded to all participants. Certificates, medals and scholarships were sent directly to the schools or presented by NOC representatives at awards ceremonies upon request.



NORTHERN
Oklahoma College
TONKAWA | ENID | STILLWATER

The Tonkawa Film Commission
presents the
6TH ANNUAL
TONKAWA
FILM FESTIVAL

APRIL
25th & 26th

Northern
Oklahoma
College
Wilkin Hall

www.TonkawaFilmFestival.com

Student Art Exhibit opens, artist reception set for April 19

Dreamscapes—the annual Northern Oklahoma College student art exhibition is on display through May 6 in the Eleanor Hays Art Gallery in the Kinzer Performing Arts Center at NOC Tonkawa. Visual art students Ariel Calvert of Las Vegas, NV, and Leslee Richardson of Perry, planned and organized the exhibit as part of the requirements for a credited Portfolio/Gallery Seminar at NOC. Dreamscapes highlights the original art of these two artists along with works of other students enrolled in visual art and digital imaging classes during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Under the guidance of Audrey Schmitz, gallery director and art instructor, Calvert and Richardson gained experience in developing the infrastructure of the exhibit, including choosing the show title and collaborating with NOC graphic designer Paige Larson on the poster design. The students created original artworks specifically to be featured on the poster. They also prepared their own work to be exhibition-ready, produced artist statements and title cards and installed dozens of additional curated works made by other students, all as part of their professional growth as working artists.

“Overall, there is great diversity of media, subject matter and style in the works on view in Dreamscapes and the student show is always the most popular event in the Eleanor Hays Gallery,” Schmitz added. “Again, this year we are offering a ‘gallery gift shop’ of affordable art (starting at \$10), making it a perfect opportunity to buy original work at great prices from talented artists early in their career.”

A reception honoring all students is scheduled from 2 - 3 p.m. Saturday, April 19 in the art gallery. The exhibition and reception with refreshments is free and open to the public.

Regular gallery hours are 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Mon-



Northern Oklahoma College art students (from left) Ariel Calvert of Las Vegas, NV, and Leslee Richardson of Perry are featured in Dreamscapes, the annual student art exhibition on view April 15-May 6 in the Eleanor Hays Art Gallery, NOC Tonkawa. A reception honoring all NOC student artists with work in the exhibit is set for 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. Saturday, April 19 in the art gallery. The exhibition and reception with refreshments is free and open to the public. (Photo by Audrey Schmitz)

day - Friday and during events in the KPAC. The exhibit will also be open following NOC commencement Saturday, May 3. For more information about Dreamscapes contact Schmitz at 580.628.6670 or audrey.schmitz@noc.edu.

NORTHERN OKLAHOMA COLLEGE

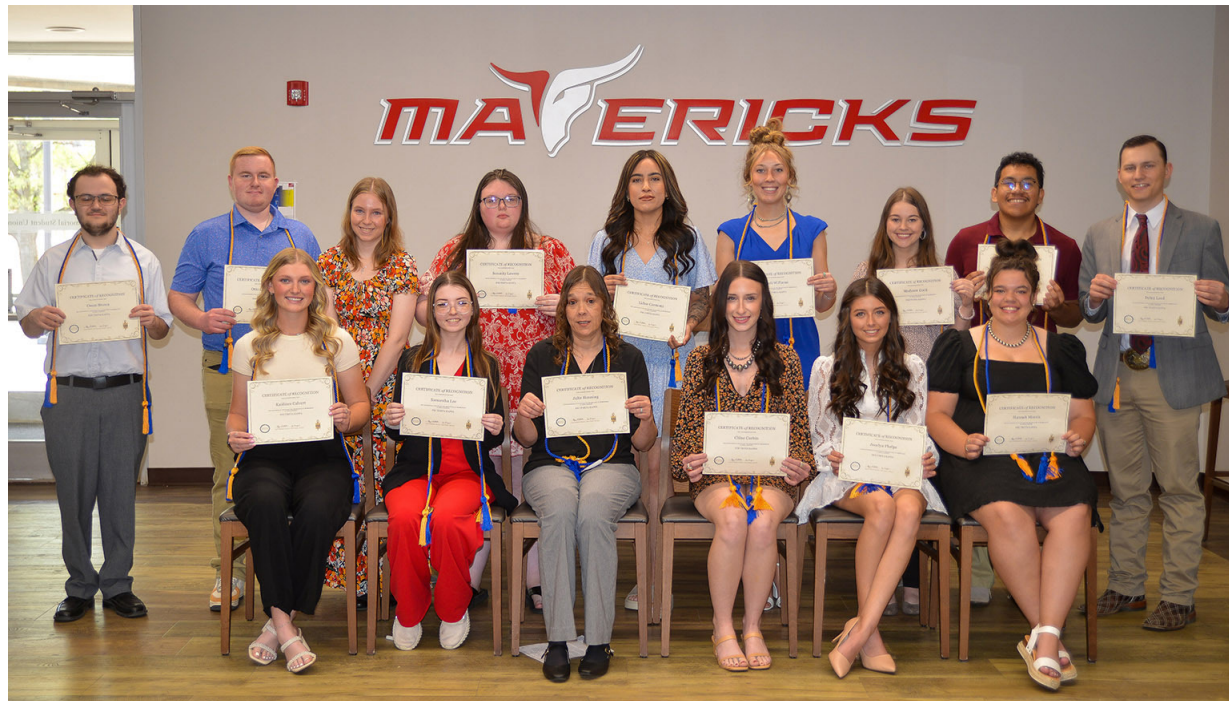
NOC DIVISION OF FINE ARTS *Presents*
 Concert Band, College Choir *and* Madrigal Singers

Spring Concert

SUN | APR. 27, 2025 | 2 PM
 Kinzer Performing Arts Center at NOC Tonkawa

Concert Band <i>performing</i> British Band Classics	College Choir <i>performing</i> Modern Choral Works	Madrigal Singers <i>performing</i> Dream of Freedom
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FREE ADMISSION | *Children under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult.*



Phi Theta Kappa Inductees for 2025 at Northern Oklahoma College are Front Row (l-r): Kaidince Calvert, Samantha Lee, Julie Henning, Chloe Corbin, Jocelyn Phelps, Hannah Morris. Back Row (l-r): Owen Brown, Otto Cardwell, Leslee Richardson, Serenity Lowrey, Lidise Carmona, Marli Williams, Madysen Cook, Jose Sosa Martinez, Dylan Leed. The students were inducted on Sunday, April 11.

Fifteen NOC students inducted into Phi Theta Kappa at Sunday ceremony

The Northern Oklahoma College Tonkawa Phi Theta Kappa Xi Theta Chapter announced their 2024-25 inductees this week.

Fifteen students were inducted on Sunday, April 13 at the Walcher Conference Center at NOC Tonkawa.

They include Owen Brown, Hunter, Oklahoma; Kaidince Calvert, Sapulpa, Oklahoma; Otto Cardwell, Lamont, Oklahoma; Lidise Carmona, Ponca City, Oklahoma; Madysen Cook, Ponca City, Oklahoma; Chloe Corbin, Guymon, Oklahoma; Julie Henning, Ponca City, Oklahoma; Samantha Lee, Tonkawa, Oklahoma; Dylan Leed, Lilitz, Pennsylvania; Serenity Lowrey, Ponca City, Oklahoma; Hannah Morris, Fair Grove, Missouri; Jocelyn Phelps, Tecumseh,

Oklahoma; Jose Sosa Martinez, Laverne, Oklahoma; Marli Williams, Tecumseh, Oklahoma, and Leslee Richardson, Perry, Oklahoma.

Officers include Leslee Richardson, Perry, Oklahoma – President; Trysta Adkins, Fairfax, Oklahoma – Vice President; Aniya Berry, Arkansas City, Kansas – Recording Secretary, and Kaidince Calvert, Sapulpa – Public Relations Secretary

According to NOC Phi Theta Kappa co-sponsor Dee Cooper, “The Purpose for Phi Theta Kappa shall be to recognize and encourage scholarship among two-year college students. To Achieve this purpose, Phi Theta Kappa shall

(See Phi Theta Kappa on Page 6)

★ ——— NORTHERN OKLAHOMA COLLEGE ——— ★
 ★ ——— NOC Aggie Alumni & Friends ——— ★

THE GATHERING

Save The Date

2

MAY

2025

GOLF SCRAMBLE
 9 AM | BLACKWELL GOLF COURSE

EVENT & LIVE AUCTION
 5 PM | PRE-EVENT MIXER
 6 PM | MAIN EVENT
 OSAGE CASINO & HOTEL | PONCA CITY

★ ——— www.noc.edu ——— ★

NOC Calendar

April 19

Remember the Ten Run, Stillwater
 Away Jets Baseball vs. Western, 1 p.m./3 p.m.
 Student Art Exhibit Reception, Eleanor Hays
 Art Gallery (KPAC), 2 p.m., Tonkawa

April 21

Away Mavs Baseball vs. UA Rich Mountain, 1
 p.m./3 p.m.
 Away Mavs Softball vs. Dodge City (KS), 2
 p.m./4 p.m.
 Easter Egg Hunt, Gazebo, 7 p.m., Tonkawa

April 22

Free Lunch, BCM, 11:15 a.m. – 1 p.m.,
 Tonkawa
 UNOC Game Night, Gantz Center, 7 p.m.,
 Enid
 The Gathering, BCM, 8 p.m., Enid

April 23

Free Lunch, Wesley House, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.,
 Tonkawa
 Free BCM Lunch, Gantz Center, 11:30 a.m. – 1
 p.m., Enid
 Home Jets Baseball vs. Carl Albert, 1 p.m./3
 p.m.
 Academic Awards Reception, Renfro Center,
 5:30 p.m., Tonkawa
 The Gathering, BCM, 7:30 p.m., Tonkawa

April 24

Away Jets Softball vs. Eastern, 2 p.m./4 p.m.
 Home Mavs Baseball vs. NWOSU JV, 3 p.m.

April 25

Tonkawa Film Festival, Wilkin Hall, 6 p.m.
 Final Day to Withdraw from L8 Courses with-
 out Evaluation

Phi Theta Kappa

(Continued from Page 5)

provide opportunity for the development of leadership and service, for an intellectual climate for exchange of ideas and ideals, for lively fellowship for scholars, and for stimulation of interest in continuing academic excellence.”

The featured speaker was Audrey Schmitz, NOC Fine Arts Instructor and Director of the Eleanor Hays Art Gallery.

Schmitz presented the sculpture ‘Pietà,’ a work created by Michelangelo while in his 20’s. Schmitz discussed the “six P’s” which include

passion, potential, promise, proportion, perfection, and planning that inspired Michelangelo and how students today can use the same inspiration for their futures.

Inductees were presented a certificate and a PTK cord that will be worn at NOC Graduation on May 3. Inductees took an oath while holding lit candles.

The chapter is sponsored by NOC instructors Lynn DeMuth and Dee Cooper.



Life changing.

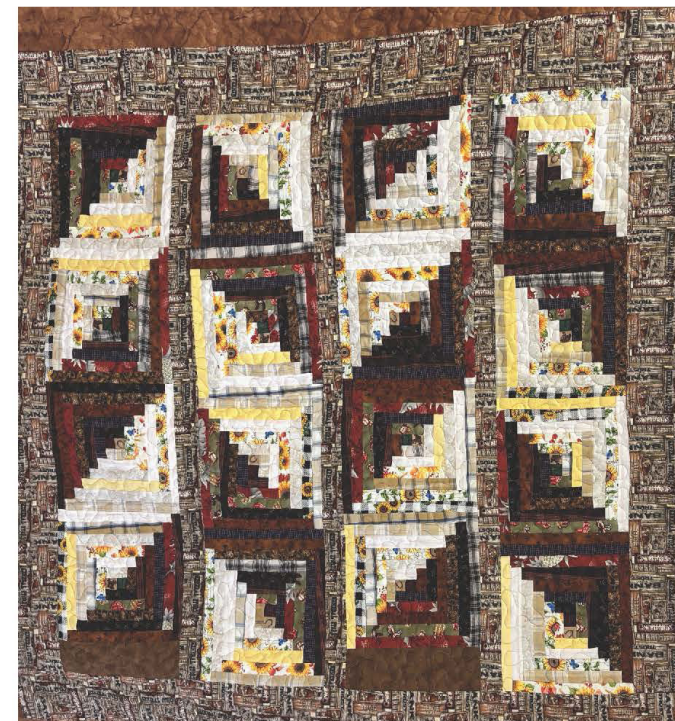


NORTHERN
Oklahoma College

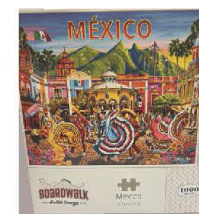
Viva la Raza! Club Raffle

PRIZES

- 1st place – Handmade Scrappy Log Cabin Quilt (\$250 value)
- 2nd place - \$100.00 Visa gift card – 180 Direct Care
- 3rd place – \$50.00 Mama Tita’s gift certificate
- 4th place - \$40.00 El Carnitas gift certificate
- 5th place - 1000-piece Mexico Puzzle



GIFT CARD PRIZES



Raffle Drawing May 2, 2025

During Fiesta Friday, Downtown Enid
 Winner need not be present to win

Enid Academic Awards presented

Northern Oklahoma College Enid students were honored Wednesday night at the Annual Academic Awards Banquet in Montgomery Hall inside the Gantz Center.

NOC Vice President for Enid Jeremy Hise welcomed those who came to celebrate the student's accomplishments.

"This is all about recognizing all the hard work, the talent and commitment of our students," he said. "We have a chance to celebrate academic excellence, leadership, and service. I can't think of a better reason to come together than our students."

"Our faculty are the heartbeat of our institution," he added. "They have the most direct access and influence on our students and have the most impact. They make nights like tonight possible."

"We also want to thank the families, friends, and supporters of these students. There are so many people who have made sacrifices to make this event possible," Hise added.

The following are the awards for 2024-25

President's Leadership Council Students: Luella Mitchell, Michael Donaldson

Academic Athlete of the Year: Daniel Schlehber, Jurney Johnston

Pre-Engineering: Ethan Fritz

Biology: Kymbri Barber

Accounting: Zackary Henderson

Business: Blake Limberg

Elementary Education: Sophia Arnold

Language Arts: Joey Wyrick

Outstanding Journalism: Cameron Griffin

Math: Luke Scoggins, Seth Scoggins

Social Science: Dylan Moser

Behavioral Science: Brandi Layton

Outstanding Volunteer: Brandy Hise

The Warren and Dr. Mencacci Outstanding Team Academic Achievement Award: NOC Lady Jets Basketball.

4.0 Student Award: Crystal Smith, Kymbri Kobs, Jordan Schram, Luella Mitchell, Esteban Maxwell, Cale Wetwiska, Sophia Arnold, Daniel Schlehuber, Jurney Johnston, Marisol Casillas, Kira Siragusa, Ashlyn Soechting, Lizbeth Lopez, Janet Roman, Zackary Henderson, Janie Martinez-Gonzales, Jenna Thomas, Luke Scoggins, Krysna Hedy.

Reach Higher Graduate: Crysta Balch (Rabe), Andrea Bunch, Kendall Chmielewski, Michelle Cross, Michelle Gaines, Ilyssa Gonzales, Tameela Harsha, Sara Hullett, Brandi Layton, Chris Nace, Michael Peterson, Ashley Reuss, Kasey Schmig, Chasta Shelite, Madison Solis, Angelina Lokeijak.

The event was emceed by Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Shelly Mencacci.

Stillwater academic awards presented

Northern Oklahoma College Stillwater students were honored Thursday night at the Annual Academic Awards Banquet in the Commons Area of the NOC Stillwater Classroom Building.

Vice President for NOC Stillwater Dr. Marsh Howard commended the students for their efforts.

"Tonight's banquet is a celebration of academic excellence but even more than that it is a chance

to acknowledge the time, effort, perseverance, and passion that goes into reaching the milestones that we celebrate tonight," he said. "We are here to celebrate you, our students, not just test scores and GPAs but especially the curiosity, determination, leadership, and grit that is at the heart of your successes. These awards reflect more than academic achievement, they

(See **Stillwater** on Page 8)

FIESTA FRIDAY

Food Trucks • Dancers
Live Music • DJ • and more!

In Celebration of
CINCO DE MAYO

MAY 2, 2025 | 6-9 PM
DOWNTOWN ENID

NOC

Look For Our Booth ! NOC Viva La Raza! Hispanic Student Club

PURCHASE \$5 RAFFLE TICKETS TO WIN GREAT PRIZES!

Contact Dr. Mary Ann McCoy: 580.548.2394
maryann.mccoy@noc.edu

Stillwater

(Continued from Page 7)

reveal and celebrate outstanding character.”

“I also want to take some time to recognize those who have helped you along the way,” he added. “First, our incredible faculty. They don’t teach by declaring how things should be, they show up with passion and consistency, walking alongside our students to support them as they find their own path.”

The following are the awards for 2024-25:

Biology: Emily Carman

Business: Joce Gonzales, Brady Bigheart

Earth Studies: Lane Bloyd

Adam Worden Award: Christa Solpietro

Language Arts: Christa Solpietro

Math: Desiree Cannon and Grayson Wells

Social Science: Anita Jones, Ronna Wilson

4.0 GPA: Maggie Battles, Cody Birchfield,

Dalton Griswold

Reach Higher Graduates: Cody Birchfield,

Truenai Dunn, Amber Jones, Tiffany Wright.

The event was emceed by Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Shelly Mencacci.

Fine Arts upcoming events

The NOC Tonkawa Division of Fine Arts has a number of events scheduled for April and May.

On April 27 the NOC Choir, Chamber Singers and Concert Band will perform at 2 p.m. at the Kinzer Performing Arts Center.

Then, on April 29, a “Play in a Day” will be held at the Kinzer Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m.

On May 6, students will perform their Student Honors Recitals at the KPAC at 7:30 p.m.

The band will also perform at NOC Tonkawa and Enid/Stillwater Commencement Exercises.

April Faculty/Staff Birthdays



Mary Lou Harris

April 18

Shannon Varner

April 22

Denise Bay

April 20

Ross Buchanan

April 27

Rachel Kirk

April 22

Anita Simpson

April 27

STAY AT NOC

SUMMER DORMS AVAILABLE

\$735

per month.

Mavericks Hall.

If interested, please contact

Student Affairs Office

ASAP.

Renna Bowers

580.628.6240

renna.bowers@noc.edu

NOC students, staff attend Oklahoma Promise/Higher Ed Day

Students and staff from Northern Oklahoma College joined other state system institutions at the Oklahoma State Capitol April 15 to demonstrate the value and importance of higher education in the state and celebrate the Governor and Legislature's ongoing support of the Oklahoma's Promise program.

Speakers during the event included Secretary of Education Nellie Tayloe Sanders, Speaker Kyle Hilbert, Sen. Ally Seifried, Rep. Arturo Alonso Sandoval, State Regents chair Dennis Casey, and Chancellor Sean Burrage.

"Students, faculty and staff from Oklahoma's public colleges and universities came together today at our State Capitol to highlight the value of a college degree and the importance of the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship for our citizens and for our state's economy," said Burrage. "Over half of the top 100 occupations identified as critical for our state – including the top 22 highest paying jobs – require an associate degree or higher. Meeting workforce needs, especially in STEM, healthcare, and education fields, remains our top priority."

Three students also spoke at the event. Maci Passmore, Carl Albert State College; Cate Campbell, Rogers State University; and Josie Castles, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, shared how pursuing higher education at Oklahoma's public college and universities has positively impacted their lives.

During the program, the following recipients of the Distinguished Service Award for Higher Education were recognized for their steadfast leadership and support of public higher education in the 2024 legislative session: Sen. Chuck Hall, Sen. Adam Pugh, Sen. Kristen Thompson, Rep. Arturo Alonso Sandoval, Rep. Trey Caldwell, Rep. Kyle Hilbert, Rep. Gerrid Kendrix,

Rep. Anthony Moore, and Rep. Cyndi Munson

"These legislative leaders are investing in Oklahoma's future: the students we serve," said State Regents Chair Dennis Casey. "Each award recipient shares our vision for higher education's critical role in meeting current and future workforce needs and strengthening our economy by helping more Oklahomans earn college degrees."

The State Regents are requesting \$9.3 million for FY26 to fund implementation of the Strong Readers Act provisions and expand concurrent enrollment. Public higher education's budget request also includes strategic investments that align with Oklahoma's projected workforce demand in STEM and healthcare and focus on increasing adult degree completion. The State Regents seek \$42 million for critical workforce development initiatives, including funds to increase enrollment and graduation in STEM, nursing, and other healthcare disciplines and provide additional scholarships for adult students nearing completion of a college degree or pursuing an industry-recognized micro-credential or certificate.

The State Regents also request \$43.7 million in FY26 to fund performance-based institutional allocations; strengthen college access and academic success services and FAFSA completion; expand student scholarships; fund innovations and efficiency initiatives; and enhance campus physical and cyber security.

Additionally, the State Regents advocate for institution-specific allocations of \$403 million to meet campus needs, including system and structure maintenance projects, and fund strategic collaborations.

(See **Higher Ed Day** on Page 9)

STAY AT NOC

SUMMER

DORMS AVAILABLE

\$735 per month.
Jets Hall.

If Interested, Contact E.J. Taylor ASAP
580.548.2344 | Eric.Taylor@noc.edu

Higher Ed Day

(Continued from Page 9)

Expanding the Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Scholarship Act tax credit is also a priority for the State Regents. Authorizing the tax credit for donor contributions to fund need-based scholarships for students attending public colleges and universities will support efforts to increase Oklahoma's college-educated workforce.

Another legislative priority for public higher education is refining Oklahoma's Promise to reduce administrative barriers to scholarship access and participation. Strategies include developing an appeal process to assist students facing unique circumstances and extending the

application deadline to ensure no qualified student is excluded.

Recognized by many as one of the top promise scholarship programs in the nation, Oklahoma's Promise is considered a national model that emphasizes both academic preparation and financial support for college. More than 115,000 students have earned college tuition scholarships through Oklahoma's Promise since the program's inception. For more information about Oklahoma's Promise or to apply online, visit www.okpromise.org.

