

MARCH 2025

Panhandle

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY

OPSU.edu

**SPRING ENROLLMENT SURGE
BRINGS NEW ENERGY**



OKLAHOMA
PANHANDLE STATE
UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 430
Goodwell, OK 73939
Tel: 580-349-2611
Toll Free: 1-800-664-OPSU
Fax: 580-349-2302



ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Julie Dinger — University President
Dr. Charla Lewis — Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. Ryan Blanton — Vice President of Advancement
Liz McMurphy — Vice President of Fiscal Affairs
Victor Esparza — Athletic Director
Laura Hutchinson — Dean of Student Affairs

PANHANDLE MAGAZINE

Natasha Eidson — Director of Campus Communications
Lauren McBee — Marketing Coordinator
Tatum Hall — Sports Information Director

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Natasha Eidson — Lauren McBee — Maddie Flanagan
Kendal Smart — Judith Harris — Rylee Sprague

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ENROLLMENT SURGE FUELS VIBRANT STUDENT LIFE AT OPSU

Oklahoma Panhandle State University

has kicked off the Spring 2025 semester with a 2.8% increase in enrollment, marking a significant momentum shift driven by a strategic focus on student retention. This growth underscores the university's commitment to fostering a supportive and engaging environment, ensuring that students not only enroll but thrive. With the "Recruit to Retain" strategy in full effect, OPSU is seeing the fruits of its efforts to create a dynamic campus culture that enhances both academic and extracurricular experiences.

"This growth isn't just about headcount; it's about building a stronger, more dynamic campus community," said Dr. Julie Dinger, University President. "Our intentional focus on student retention, engagement, and support is paying off. Research consistently shows that a vibrant student life contributes to higher retention rates, and we're seeing that impact firsthand. It's exciting to witness how this momentum is shaping the OPSU experience."

Enrollment on the Rise

The increase in enrollment is driven by key programs that have seen significant growth. Concurrent enrollment has risen by 87.5% with 35 additional students, directly resulting from the university's efforts to streamline communication between high school counselors and OPSU through a designated central advisor. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program continues to attract students, seeing a 10.4% increase, while the Health and Physical Education program grew by 17.6%, largely due to the improved retention rate of the university football team. Certificate enrollment has skyrocketed by 233.3%, thanks to the university's efforts to expand access to Alternative Teacher Certification funded by the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund and facilitated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. OPSU is a rising leader in helping address the teacher shortage crisis in Oklahoma, serving teachers seeking alternative certification across our Great State.

"It's incredible to see the growth in our athletic programs this spring," said Victor Esparza, Athletic Director at OPSU. "Our coaches have worked tirelessly to recruit talented student-athletes who excel on the field and contribute to our campus community. I couldn't be more proud of our coaching staff and the positive impact they're making. This

enrollment growth shows that OPSU is the place for academic and athletic success."

The Heart of Campus Life

The surge in enrollment has also fueled a more vibrant student life. With more students on campus, participation in clubs, organizations, and events has reached new heights. The Student Life Department has played a pivotal role in creating an inclusive and dynamic campus culture. From planning campus traditions to fostering an inclusive community, the Student Life Department at OPSU is the driving force behind experiences that shape more than just a college career.

At OPSU, student life is more than just events on a calendar. It's about building a community where every student feels connected and valued. The Student Life Department dedicates countless hours to crafting experiences that inspire growth, friendships, and unforgettable memories.

"Our goal is to make every student feel like they belong. We want them to connect, grow, and find their place here at OPSU," shared Morgan Trevino, Student Life Coordinator. "The increase in student engagement this semester proves that our efforts are working, and I am so proud of our team."

From the excitement of New Aggie Orientation to the buzz of Welcome Week, the Student Life team is behind every detail, ensuring each event is meaningful and impactful. But it's not just about planning events; it's about creating moments that matter. "We have a strong team that works hard to bring friends and the school as a whole closer together. We think outside the box to create our events so they will appeal to each and every student," said Aspen Jolly, who coordinates weekly activities.

"Morgan and her team pour their hearts into every event. Their dedication and hard work are why our students feel connected and valued on campus," said Laura Hutchinson, Dean of Student Services. "They go above and beyond to create an environment where students don't just attend college—they thrive."

Looking ahead, the Student Life team is committed to evolving and enhancing the student experience even further. With new initiatives and dedication to student success, the future is bright at OPSU. Student life is more than attending events; it's about belonging, growing, and thriving. The Student Life team is behind it all, pouring their heart and soul into every experience to make OPSU feel like home for students. **P**



OPSU FOUNDATION

EXPANDS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING FOR 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Panhandle State Foundation is proud to announce a significant increase in funding for its scholarship program. The Foundation has allocated an additional \$120,000 in scholarship funding for the 2025-2026 academic year, a move made possible by implementing new accounting software, updated investment strategies, and updated policies and procedures.

"We are excited to be able to increase scholarship funding to deserving students pursuing their educational dreams," said Chyanna Black, Executive Director of Panhandle State Foundation. "This increase is a testament to the Foundation's dedication to making every penny count and ensuring the legacy of our donors continues to reach its fullest impact."

In an era where every dollar counts, the adoption of advanced accounting software has revolutionized the Foundation's financial management. This software allows for greater transparency, accuracy, and efficiency in managing funds. The Foundation can identify and allocate resources more effectively than ever by automating routine tasks and providing detailed insights. Guided by expert advice and a commitment to long-term growth, the Foundation has optimized its investments. This strategic approach ensures sustainable scholarship funding while aligning with the Foundation's mission to support Oklahoma Panhandle State University students.

Dr. Ryan Blanton, Vice President of Advancement, praised the efforts of the Foundation leadership. "Chyanna Black and Stephanie LeGrange, along with the entire Board, have done an excellent job navigating these changes. Their dedication ensures that every dollar donated has the greatest possible effect on our students and their futures."

A comprehensive review and update of policies and procedures have further contributed to this milestone. By streamlining administrative processes and adopting best practices, the Foundation has maximized the impact of every donation. The expanded funding will allow the Foundation to award either more or a larger scholarship depending on the endowment restrictions, providing greater support to students in various fields. The move aligns with the Foundation's mission to invest in the university's future by empowering students to succeed. The Panhandle State Foundation remains steadfast in its commitment to educational excellence and donor support. This significant increase in scholarship funding represents a step forward in fulfilling its mission to make higher education accessible and attainable for students.

The application deadline for the 2025-2026 scholarships has now passed. The Panhandle State Foundation Scholarships committees are reviewing applications to award scholarships to deserving students. Students are encouraged to visit <https://opsu.edu/panhandle-state-foundation/> or contact the office directly at 580-349-1392 for information about future scholarship opportunities and eligibility requirements. **P**

OPSU NAMES PTCI ESPORTS LOUNGE

IN RECOGNITION OF LONG-STANDING PARTNERSHIP



OPSU proudly announces its Esports Lounge as the “PTCI Esports Lounge” in recognition of PTCI’s outstanding contributions to the university and its students. This decision honors PTCI’s continuous investment in student success, innovation, and community development. PTCI has been a dedicated partner of OPSU for decades, providing critical support in areas such as athletics, communication infrastructure, and student development. The organization has played a pivotal role in establishing and growing OPSU’s Esports program, offering guidance, funding, and opportunities for student competition.

“Supporting Esports programs with OPSU and high schools in our service area is a natural fit with PTCI’s mission of highlighting our fiber broadband networks, delivering progressive and high-quality communication services for our customers, and promoting PTCI values of embracing drive and innovation while having fun! What speaks to this more than gaming?” said Jana Wallace, CEO of PTCI.

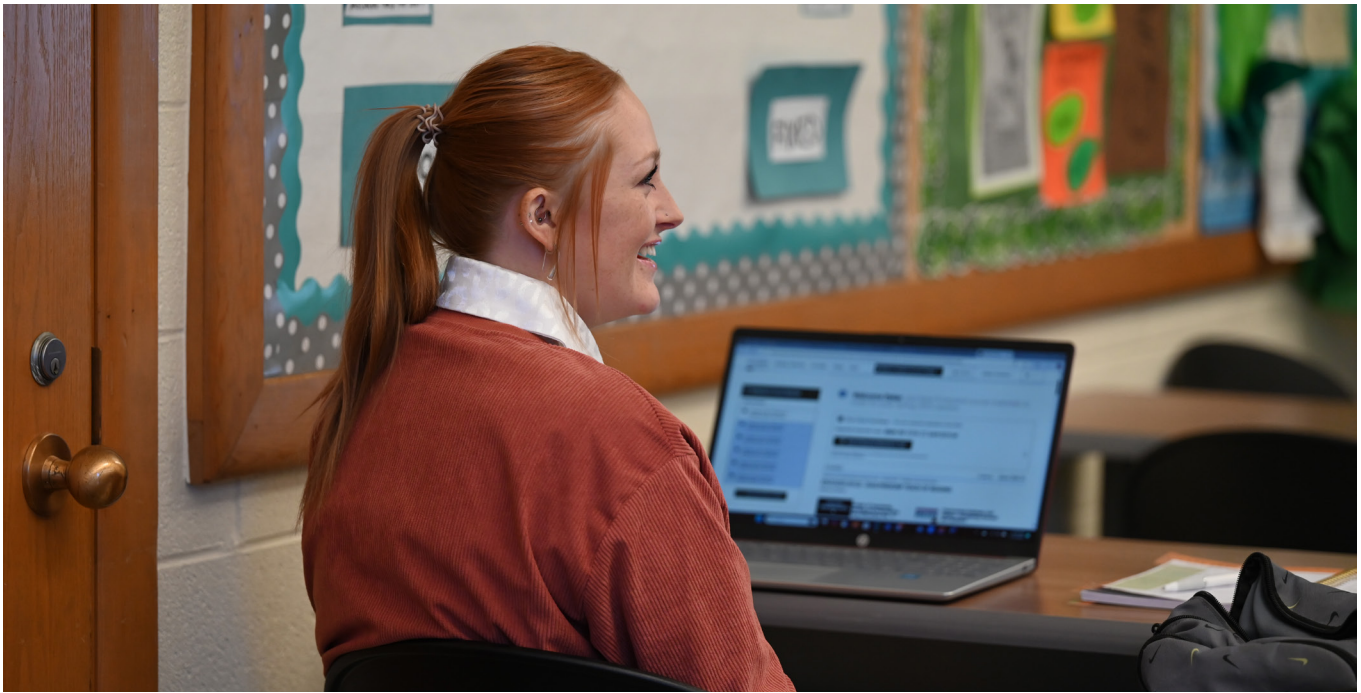
Beyond Esports, PTCI has expanded OPSU’s communication and live-streaming capabilities, making campus events more accessible to students, families, and community members. Additionally, PTCI has long supported student internships and continuing education initiatives, often hiring OPSU graduates for full-time positions within the company. “PTCI is extremely community-focused, and we view OPSU as a core anchor institution in our region that provides a quality and affordable education. Many of our staff have attended or graduated from OPSU and are doing amazing things right here in our communities. We always look for great opportunities to keep or return ‘our’ kids home to work and live,” Wallace added.

As Esports continues to grow, it provides students with highly marketable skills beyond gaming. A recent report published by NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association highlights the benefits of Esports, including proficiency in networking and hardware, digital literacy, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and team building. “These are qualities that definitely stand out to us when hiring and developing great employees and our next generation of leaders in the telecommunications industry,” Wallace noted.

The naming of the PTCI Esports Lounge represents a continued commitment to strengthening the OPSU-PTCI partnership. PTCI is excited about future collaborations, including Aggie Connections and the opportunity to award two \$2,500 scholarships during PTCI’s Annual Meeting of cooperative members.

University President Dr. Julie Dinger expressed gratitude for PTCI’s support. “PTCI has been a true partner in our mission to serve students and prepare them for the future. Their investment in our Esports program not only enhances our campus but also opens doors for students to explore new technologies, build critical skills, and connect with the broader world. We are incredibly grateful for their belief in our students and their support of our community.”

As OPSU continues to expand its Esports program, the PTCI Esports Lounge will serve as a state-of-the-art space where students can compete, connect, and develop valuable skills. With PTCI’s support, the university is excited to see how this partnership will continue to shape the future of Esports. **P**



OKLAHOMA MAGAZINE

THE EDUCATION PREVIEW

Striving for and obtaining a higher education degree is rewarding and surely worth the effort – but can also be expensive and overwhelming. Luckily, leadership at area colleges and universities are determined to help students succeed, no matter their academic goals. We talk with experts across the state about the pros and cons of standardized testing scores for admissions, alongside budding AI integration technology, how quantum computing is evolving and becoming more accessible for education, ways colleges are ensuring their educators are staying sharp, and strategic majors for the best possible employment outcomes.

In a world with ever-evolving avenues for information and self-development, more and more colleges are starting to recognize that standardized test scores are not always indicative of someone's true intelligence and potential. Tulsa Community College is one such institution. Oklahoma Panhandle State University takes on similar guidelines for admissions, says Charla Lewis, Ed.D., OPSU's vice president of academic affairs.

"OPSU is an open admission school," she says. "Standardized test scores are not required for admittance, but they can be used to place students in the correct general education courses. We use essays in our application to apply for academic scholarships along with GPA."

From major universities to small colleges, curriculum management keeps educators continually striving to give their students the best instruction possible. But how much work goes into creating and approving these lesson plans?

At OPSU, Lewis says, "the curriculum approval process is involved. Department chairs take the lead on curriculum management. When they want to make a change, they take the changes to the curriculum committee (made up of deans and department chairs across the university) along with justifications for the changes. The committee will vote to approve or deny the proposed changes. If the changes are approved by the committee, they are presented to our A&M board of regents for their consideration. If the A&M board approves, then the changes are presented to the OSRHE for their consideration. Any substantive changes are then presented to our accrediting body. Once approved, the new curriculum is noted in the catalog." **P**



DR. HASIB CHOWDHURY:

PIONEERING HOSPITALITY EDUCATION AT OPSU WITH ADVANCED CERTIFICATIONS

Renowned for his expertise in Hospitality Management, Dr. Hasib Chowdhury continues to set new standards in education at OPSU with his dual certifications: Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE) and Certified Hospitality Industry Analyst (CHIA).

When asked about his motivation for pursuing the CHE and CHIA certifications, Dr. Chowdhury shared, “The CHE certification is dedicated to refining teaching techniques and overall methods for educators. It’s designed not just for hospitality instructors but for educators across all fields. I pursued this certification to elevate my teaching skills and better serve my students.”

Dr. Chowdhury’s pursuit of the CHIA certification stemmed from a desire to deepen his expertise in the hotel industry data analytics. “I wanted to gain a thorough understanding of hotel industry analytics to enrich my teaching in hospitality-related courses at OPSU,” he explained. The CHIA certification, offered by STR, focuses on data specific to the North American hotel industry.

Dr. Chowdhury plans to leverage his CHE certification to enhance his instructional techniques across all classes related to his teaching interests, not just within hospitality courses. “The knowledge from the CHE certification will be valuable for shaping my approach as an educator in various subjects,” he said.

The CHIA certification will benefit hospitality courses such as Hotel Operations Management and Revenue Management. Dr. Chowdhury intends to incorporate CHIA lessons into these classes and offer students the opportunity to obtain their CHIA certifications under his guidance. “This certification will significantly aid our students as they prepare for careers in hotel management and related fields,” he noted.

In addition to these achievements, he also earned the Certification in Advanced Hospitality and Tourism Analytics (CAHTA) at the start of the year. Like CHIA, CAHTA enhances his expertise in hospitality analytics, further enriching his educational approach.

Recognized as an authority in the field, Dr. Chowdhury was featured

as an expert in WalletHub’s article on the best hotel credit cards. His insights on maximizing rewards and benefits underscore his industry knowledge and leadership in hospitality management. His contributions demonstrate his dedication to hospitality education and industry knowledge. To read his expert opinions, visit the full article [here](#).

Dr. Chowdhury is confident that the CHE, CHIA, and CAHTA certifications will positively impact the hospitality industry. “These certifications enhance the skillsets of educators and, in turn, produce more competent hospitality professionals,” he stated. CHE improves overall teaching methods, while CHIA and CAHTA boost technical skills related to hotel data analytics, preparing students for advanced roles in the industry.

OPSU is in the early stages of adding a hospitality management option to the Bachelor of Business Administration in Business Administration. These certifications will directly benefit this future program. The CHE certification will aid instructors across various courses, while the CHIA and CAHTA certifications will enhance specialized hospitality courses. Beginning in Fall 2025, with board approval, the College of Business and Technology will introduce new hospitality-related majors, further integrating Dr. Chowdhury’s certifications into the curriculum.

Dean for the College of Business and Technology, Vicki Pasque, stated, “Dr. Chowdhury’s achievement of these certifications is a testament to his dedication and expertise, which will align well with our vision to add a Hospitality Management option to our Business Administration Degree. His commitment to enhancing his teaching skills and expanding his knowledge in hospitality analytics will enrich our curriculum and exemplify our university’s vision of preparing students to excel in their careers.”

Dr. Chowdhury’s dedication to advancing his qualifications proves OPSU’s commitment to providing top-notch education by an exceptional faculty. His achievements reflect personal growth and significantly enhance OPSU’s academic offerings. **P**

Our Nowhere Panhandle Histories



Our Nowhere: Panhandle Histories



Listen today!

REDISCOVERING THE PANHANDLE:

HISTORY TOLD THROUGH OUR NOWHERE PODCAST

“Our Nowhere: Panhandle Histories” is a captivating podcast that takes a fresh look at the rich and diverse history of the Oklahoma and Texas Panhandles. Created by Dr. Gary Girod, an assistant professor of history and the award-winning host of The French History Podcast, alongside Dr. Rebekah Wagenbach, the Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Education at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, this project blends academic expertise with cutting-edge digital, public, and oral history methods.

“This project launches a Digital Humanities Era at OPSU. It allows us to use cutting-edge technology to tell stories about real people in the Panhandle and deliver it to a worldwide audience,” stated Dr. Rebekah Wagenbach, College of Arts and Education Dean. “We hope to get people to love No Man’s Land as much as we do.”

This interdisciplinary initiative is driven by students, offering History, English, Education, Art, and other majors a chance to contribute to the podcast’s development. Through these contributions, “Our Nowhere” explores the historical events that shaped the region and is an academic tool that bridges generations of scholars and listeners alike.

Funded by the Masonic Grant for Cultural Enrichment and hosted by Evergreen Podcasts, this large-scale endeavor is dedicated to uncovering the forgotten and often overlooked histories of the Oklahoma and Texas

Panhandles. The podcast vividly depicts life in these vast, frequently misunderstood territories, from the region’s indigenous peoples to early explorers and settlers.

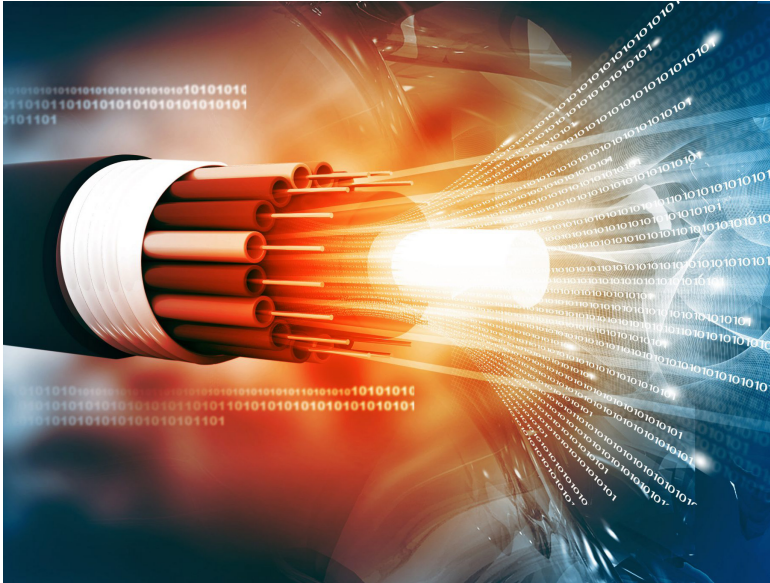
Episodes delve into topics like the Panhandle exploration, early settlers’ struggles, and the cultural evolution that still defines the area today. The aim is to tell the story of this fascinating region in a way that is both educational and engaging for a broad audience.

Assistant Professor Dr. Gary Girod said, “Our Nowhere is OPSU’s first step into digital humanities. It’s all part of our plan to upgrade what the university offers while having much fun.”

The project’s commitment to public history allows listeners to immerse themselves in the history of the Panhandle while also exploring the intersection of oral histories, archival research, and public storytelling. This is history for the 21st century – accessible, interactive, and driven by the next generation of historians.

Follow Our Nowhere: Panhandle Histories on Facebook and the College of Arts and Education’s Instagram page for updates on new episodes and behind-the-scenes insights. With its thoughtful, engaging content and commitment to community-driven research, this podcast is a must-listen for anyone interested in the deep and diverse past of the Oklahoma and Texas Panhandles. **P**

OPSU LAUNCHES COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE



Oklahoma Panhandle State University is undertaking a comprehensive network infrastructure upgrade, a multi-phase project designed to bring the university's technology into the 21st century. This ambitious initiative is overseen by Vice President Liz McMurphy's office in collaboration with IT Director Jerome Ortiz and is fully funded through the Deferred Maintenance budget. This investment underscores OPSU's commitment to modernizing essential infrastructure and enhancing digital experiences for students, faculty, and staff.

The project's first phase focuses on a critical overhaul of OPSU's core infrastructure by replacing the existing multimode fiber optic cables with high-performance single-mode fiber optic cables. This foundational upgrade will significantly increase bandwidth capacity, improve signal quality over longer distances, and provide the flexibility needed for future network expansion. "Upgrading to single-mode fiber optics is essential for supporting the data-intensive demands of today's digital world," said OPSU's IT Director Jerome Ortiz. "This change isn't just about faster internet speeds; it's about building a network that can grow with the university's needs and support future innovations." OPSU has contracted TELCO Supply Company to implement this phase, ensuring a robust and future-proof network foundation.

Building on the upgraded fiber infrastructure, the second phase involves replacing outdated network switches and access points

exceeding a decade of service. OPSU will deploy state-of-the-art Meraki cloud-based network equipment, dramatically improving Wi-Fi coverage and performance across campus. This upgrade will enable students to connect seamlessly from anywhere on campus and lay the groundwork for smart campus initiatives powered by IoT, including potential applications like smart lighting, environmental monitoring, and building management. "This investment in cloud-based network equipment will provide a more reliable and faster internet experience for our students," said Ortiz. "We're creating an environment where connectivity is seamless, which is essential for modern learning and campus life."

The final phase focuses on replacing OPSU's aging phone system with a modern Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) solution. This transition will enhance communication quality and flexibility, streamline operations, and reduce maintenance costs. The new VOIP system is expected to provide more reliable tools for staff and faculty while aligning with contemporary communication standards. "By moving to a VOIP system, we're not only upgrading our technology but also enhancing the way our campus communicates," Ortiz explained. "This will allow for more efficient operations and ensure that our communication tools are as advanced as the rest of our network."

Vice President Liz McMurphy emphasized the upgrade's strategic importance, stating, "This project represents a significant investment in the future of OPSU. Modernizing our technological infrastructure ensures that our students and faculty have the tools to succeed. It's about creating a digital environment that supports innovation and growth."

This comprehensive network infrastructure upgrade is a strategic investment in OPSU's future. By modernizing its technology, OPSU empowers its students, faculty, and staff with a more connected and efficient learning environment. The initiative prepares the university for future innovations, establishing a solid foundation for integrating IT technologies. By enhancing campus operations and facilitating data-driven insights, OPSU is taking proactive steps to position itself at the forefront of technological advancement in higher education. This project addresses current needs and ensures the university is ready to meet the demands of an increasingly digital world. **P**

OPSU FRESHMAN

BEXLEI GOOD WON HIGH OVERALL INDIVIDUAL AT NATIONAL COMPETITION



The OPSU Meat Judging Team continues to make its mark on the national stage, with freshman standout Bexlei Good leading the charge at the Southwestern Meat Judging Contest, held at the Fort Worth Stock Show. Competing against top teams from across the country, Good delivered an exceptional performance, earning the prestigious title of High Overall Individual and securing multiple first-place finishes.

A native of Fargo, Oklahoma, Good dominated the competition, placing first in Total Beef, Pork Judging, and Total Placings. She also claimed second in Beef Grading, third in Questions, and fourth in Beef Judging. Her impressive performance shows the dedication and discipline that define OPSU's meat judging legacy.

“Bexlei Good’s skill, grit, and determination exemplify the excellence of our OPSU Meat Judging Team.”

— Dr. Julie Dinger, University President

OPSU President Dr. Julie Dinger expressed immense pride in Good's achievements and the team's continued success. “Bexlei Good’s skill, grit, and determination exemplify the excellence of our OPSU Meat Judging Team. Her relentless pursuit of success is a testament to the hard work and dedication that define this team, of whom I am so proud. Their commitment to excellence continues to set the standard in collegiate meat judging.”

The team extends its gratitude to National Beef and Texas Tech University Meat Science for providing exceptional practice facilities and to AMSA and Columbia Packing Co., Inc. for hosting a fantastic contest. Additionally, special recognition goes to Coach Fox, whose leadership and dedication have been instrumental in the team's success.

With this major victory, Good and the OPSU Meat Judging Team now focus on the South Plains Contest, determined to continue their winning streak. Their success highlights OPSU's commitment to hands-on learning and student excellence in agriculture. For more information about the OPSU Meat Judging Team and their journey, visit www.opsu.edu or follow their progress on social media. **P**

ANNOUNCES 73RD ANNUAL OPSU DR. JERRY AND GWEN MARTIN BULL SALE



Oklahoma Panhandle State University is excited to announce the 73rd Annual OPSU Dr. Jerry and Gwen Martin Bull Sale, a time-honored tradition that continues to shape the livestock industry. Established in 1952 by Milton England, the OPSU Bull Test remains the longest-running program in the United States. Over the years, Dr. Jerry and Gwen Martin dedicated countless hours and effort to ensuring the program's continued success, preserving its legacy, and maintaining its excellence. Their commitment kept the bull test running for over five decades. The sale will be at the Milton England Activity Center on February 25th, with lunch served at noon and the sale beginning at 1 PM.

"The Bull Test sale is a Super Bowl-type event for the Animal Science Department. Back in September, some of the best genetics from across the state came to OPSU," stated Dean Tracy Kincannon. "Now, some of the very best producers will come and feel confident the genetics they are adding to their operation will add value, making the Dr. Jerry and Gwen Martin performance Bull Sale one of the best in the state."

The sale will feature top-tier bulls from Angus, Red Angus, Hereford, and Charolais breeds. These bulls have undergone a rigorous 112-day test, which began with their arrival in September and an official weigh-in on October 8th. The program ensures that only the highest-performing bulls are offered for sale, providing buyers with reliable genetic data and performance insights. Precision breeding and genomic technology advancements have transformed the selection process, allowing producers to invest in bulls with highly targeted traits, including improved meat quality and disease resistance. With science-backed assurances, buyers can make informed decisions that will yield sustainable benefits for their herds. We are proud to highlight the outstanding contributions of our bull producers. Last year, a top bull was sold for an impressive \$10,000, showcasing the exceptional quality of our herd. A small percentage of the proceeds from this sale will go toward supporting the continuous improvements of our bull test program at OPSU.

Beyond its role in the livestock industry, the OPSU Dr. Jerry and Gwen Martin Bull Sale is a premier educational opportunity for students in the College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing. Students gain real-world experience in genetics, business management, and event coordination through hands-on involvement. Their contributions include animal care and preparation, genetic data analysis, marketing, auction logistics, customer relations, financial management, and professional networking. The OPSU Foundation houses a fund account for donors to contribute during the Bull Sale. This year, support will go towards the purchase of a new chute. This dedicated account allows for donations that directly aid in improving the program's infrastructure. We are deeply grateful for the ongoing community support and commitment to the growth of the OPSU Dr. Jerry and Gwen Martin Bull Sale.

Strategic partnerships with the Oklahoma Angus Association, Hansford County Vet Hospital, and Matt C. Sims Auction, Inc. further strengthen the sales' success. These collaborations provide industry expertise, marketing reach, and logistical support, ensuring a seamless and professional event. Additionally, local sponsors and media partners are vital in maximizing visibility and attendance. Those interested in receiving a catalog and performance reports should contact Dr. Crystal Tolle at 580-349-1507 or by email at Crystal.Tolle@opsu.edu. **P**



OPSU LAUNCHES

AGGIE ALERT SAFETY APP

Oklahoma Panhandle State University is excited to introduce Aggie Alert, a new mobile campus safety app designed to enhance the safety, well-being, and preparedness of the OPSU community. This free tool provides students, faculty, and staff with immediate access to vital resources and information, ensuring they stay safe and informed on and off campus.

Aggie Alert offers a range of safety features that address various emergency and non-emergency situations. The "Active Threat" feature is designed for immediate danger and active shooter scenarios, allowing users to respond quickly and appropriately. The "Report a Tip" function enables individuals to anonymously share safety concerns, promoting a proactive approach to campus safety. Additionally, the "Friend Walk" feature allows users to share their route with trusted contacts, providing an added layer of security when walking alone. For non-emergency situations, "Text with Campus Security" offers direct communication with campus safety officials. The app also includes push notifications for real-time updates, such as delays or campus closures due to severe weather, and quick reference guides for campus emergency procedures and local emergency resources.

Beyond safety, Aggie Alert connects users to wellness and support resources, offering easy access to academic counseling, sexual assault assistance, and peer support services. This holistic approach ensures the app is a safety tool and a resource for overall well-being.

Chief of Police Andy Ramirez emphasized the university's commitment to safety, stating, "Our goal is to make OPSU a leader in campus safety by leveraging technology to provide our students and employees with the tools they need to feel secure and informed. With Aggie Alert, we're taking a proactive step to ensure everyone can stay connected and safe, no matter the situation."

The development of Aggie Alert was a collaborative effort between OPSU's Department of Campus Safety, the Information Technology team, and OPSU Communications. Jerome Ortiz, Director of Information Technology, highlighted the importance of this partnership, saying, "This app represents our commitment to evolving with technology to meet the needs of our campus. Aggie Alert combines functionality with ease of use, making it an essential resource for the OPSU community."

Aggie Alert is now available for download on iOS and Android devices. The OPSU community is encouraged to use this valuable resource to stay prepared and connected. For more information about the app and its features, visit the OPSU website or contact Campus Safety. More details can be found at [Aggie Alert Information](#). **P**

GABRIEL GONZALEZ

NAMED OPSU ATHLETICS HEAD MEN'S SOCCER COACH



Oklahoma Panhandle State University is proud to announce the hiring of Gabriel Gonzalez as the next head coach of the Aggies men's soccer program.

Gonzalez brings a wealth of coaching experience and a proven track record of success, having spent over seven years in collegiate and high school coaching. Most recently, he served as an assistant coach for both the men's and women's programs at Texas A&M University-Texarkana, where he played a pivotal role in leading the men's team to its first-ever winning regular season and back-to-back conference tournament appearances. He also contributed to record-breaking academic success for student-athletes, helping the team achieve its highest GPA in program history.

Before his tenure at Texas A&M-Texarkana, Gonzalez significantly impacted various sports levels, including successful coaching stints at Lyon College, El Reno High School, and Redlands Community College.

"We are thrilled to welcome Coach Gonzalez to the Aggie family. His dedication to player development, competitive success, and academic excellence aligns perfectly with our vision for the men's soccer program."

— Victor Esparza, Athletic Director

"We are thrilled to welcome Coach Gonzalez to the Aggie family," said OPSU Athletic Director Victor Esparza. "His dedication to player development, competitive success, and academic excellence aligns perfectly with our vision for the men's soccer program. We look forward to seeing his impact on and off the field."

Gonzalez holds a National C Coaching License from the United States Soccer Federation and is certified in goalkeeping, first aid, and CPR. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Ethics from Mid-America Christian University.

Gonzalez will take the helm immediately as the Aggies prepare for the upcoming season. A formal introduction and press conference will be announced at a later date. **P**



KAMRON NEAL

NAMED SOUTH CENTRAL REGION MEN'S TRACK ATHLETE OF THE YEAR




Kamron Neal has been named the 2025 NAIA Indoor Track & Field South Central Region Men's Track Athlete of the Year, announced Thursday by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA). Neal, a standout sprinter from Houston, Texas, has dominated the indoor season, earning qualification for the 2025 NAIA Indoor Track & Field Championships in an impressive four events: 60 meters, 200 meters, 400 meters, and the 4x400 relay. His performance in the 200 meters has been particularly historic. He clocked a blistering 20.94 seconds, ranking him second all-time on a record-legal track in NAIA history.

OPSU Athletics is proud of the five athletes from the men's track and field team have qualified for the prestigious 2025 U.S. Marines NAIA Indoor Track & Field National Championship. The competition will take place from February 27 to March 1, 2025, at the Alachua County Sports & Events Center at Celebration Pointe in Gainesville, Florida. Along with Neal, Jason Granillo (Spade, Texas), Diego Hernandez (Texhoma, Oklahoma), Alan Martinez (Friona, Texas), and Colby Perez (Cheyenne, Oklahoma) will also represent OPSU in the highly competitive 4x400-meter relay.

Head Coach Cyrus Hall expressed his pride and optimism for the upcoming championship. "We are excited to qualify our guys to the 2025 U.S. Marine NAIA Indoor Track and Field National Championship meet. The fellas have worked hard and earned the right to go and represent Panhandle State University next week down in Florida," Hall said. "We feel like we've got a great opportunity to go down and accomplish some things. This will be a great experience for our younger guys on the relay to test themselves against the best the NAIA has to offer."

The championship also presents a significant opportunity for standout athlete Kamron Neal, who narrowly missed a title last spring, finishing third in the 200-meter outdoor event. "For Kamron, it is an opportunity for him to go chase a National Championship," Hall continued. "He came up short last spring, finishing 3rd in the 200m Outdoor. I know that has fueled him all offseason. Kamron does not like to lose. So I know he will be locked in. Should be fun watching him go try to accomplish that."

The OPSU community is rallying behind the team as they prepare to compete on the national stage. The university takes pride in the dedication and talent of these athletes, who embody the Aggie spirit of perseverance and excellence. For more information about OPSU Athletics and to follow the team's progress at the national championship, visit www.opsuaggies.com. 

BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

SEASON PREVIEW



The Oklahoma Panhandle State University Aggies baseball and softball teams are gearing up for an exciting 2025 season, showcasing determination and ambition. Aggies baseball is gearing up for a new era in the 2025 season, led by newly appointed head coach Jared Mayeda. The Aggies will conclude February with a three-game home series against Wayland Baptist University (Texas) on February 28 and March 1. They face Southern Nazarene University in a neutral-site doubleheader in Woodward, Oklahoma, on March 4. They will then hit the road again for a series against the University of Science and Arts (Okla.) in Chickasha, Oklahoma, on March 7 and 8. They will then play a single game at Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva, Oklahoma, on March 11.

Continuing their conference play, the Aggies will visit Mid-America Christian University (Okla.) in Oklahoma City for a three-game series on March 14 and 15. They return home to host Northwestern Oklahoma State University on March 18 and then welcome Southwestern Christian University for a three-game series on March 21 and 22.

The Aggies will face Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 28 and 29. They will return to Goodwell to host Nelson University (Texas) on April 4 and 5. They will then travel to Oklahoma City University for a series on April 11 and 12.

The softball team is gearing up for an exciting season under the leadership of new head coach Jim Walker. Entering his first year with the Aggies, Walker brings a wealth of experience and an impressive career. His arrival marks the beginning of a new chapter for the program, as he aims to lead the Aggies to success both on and off the field.

From February 28 to March 1, the Aggies will travel to Hobbs, New Mexico, for a non-conference series against the University of the Southwest (N.M.). This series will be followed by a return to Goodwell for the Aggies' conference home opener against Texas Wesleyan University on March 7-8. The Aggies will play doubleheaders each Day at Jim Quimby Field, with first pitches set for 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM on Friday and 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM on Saturday.

The season continues with road series against Langston University, Wayland Baptist University, and Nelson University, interspersed with home matchups against Mid-America Christian University, Central Christian College (Kan.), and Southwestern Christian University. With a supportive community and a competitive spirit, the Aggies are ready to make their mark this season. Fans can look forward to action-packed games filled with thrilling moments and unforgettable plays. Both teams are excited to see the impact of their hard work and dedication throughout the season. **P**



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