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COMPLETES DOCTORATE**  
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**SSC STUDENT CARVES PATH  
TO RECOVERY**  
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# *SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE* COLLEGIAN

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## **HIGHER ED DAY**

Seminole State College students, employees and community representatives visited the state capitol on Feb. 11 to demonstrate their support for the College.

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## Submitting to The Collegian

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## Art Department Receives Kiln Donation



The Art Department at Seminole State College was recently gifted a brand-new kiln for the college's ceramics program. SSC student Sandra Ward of Seminole donated a new electric L & L Kiln to the college in an effort to help replace aging equipment. "The donation was

met with enthusiasm and much appreciation. Our students are very thankful for the new kiln and are excited to be able to fire their pottery in the upcoming Fall 2020 semester," said Assistant Professor of Art Angela Church.



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# SSC Student Carves Path to Recovery

*A-yo Jones recounts his long journey to sobriety and SSC.*



*After replacing addiction with healthy habits and finding his support group, SSC freshman A-yo Jones decided to pursue higher education.*

In February of 2019, A-yo Jones found he had exhausted a mode of living. For 16 years, he had drank heavily and been no stranger to drug use. He lost his job a month earlier when his struggle with depression impacted his work performance.

“One day I woke up and I couldn’t get out of bed. I had the bottle next to my bed. That was my solace. That was my escape. I spent three days around the house. I didn’t call in. I lost the job. I decided I was tired of living like that,” Jones said.

Jones found himself trapped in a lifestyle far removed from the path he had envisioned for himself as a boy.

“I used to take my studies so seriously. I was a valedictorian at my eighth grade graduation,” Jones said.

Due to a custody battle between his parents, Jones transferred from a small school to Shawnee High School his freshman year. The large number of students overwhelmed Jones, and he tried to fit in wherever he could.

“I fell in with the wrong crowd. I was impressionable. I got involved in gang activity and substance abuse,” Jones said.

He dropped out of high school when he was a sophomore. He obtained his GED when he was 16 and bounced from job to job, while struggling with depression and substances.

On Feb. 24, 2019, Jones decided to take control of his life again.

“That’s my sobriety date. Up until that point, I was always trying to con-

or scheme someone, sometimes it was just myself. I needed to give it to God for real,” Jones said.

Jones, a member of the Seminole tribe, joined Wellbriety, a support system rooted in Native American culture that offers a holistic approach to overcoming substance abuse, co-occurring disorders and intergenerational trauma. Wellbriety encourages those seeking recovery to consider a four-part approach to wellness: mental, spiritual, emotional and physical. Jones began attending church regularly and fell in love with running. As he replaced his past addictions with healthy habits, he also wanted to challenge his mind.

“On a whim, I stopped by Seminole State College to see what they had to offer. I enrolled in two sum-

mer classes, and when I made A’s in those classes my belief in myself came back,” Jones said.

He enrolled full-time at SSC for the fall semester, studying health and physical education. When he completes his coursework at SSC, he plans to transfer to a four-year university and double major in kinesiology and psychology.

“Physical exercise has become a foundation of my recovery,” Jones said. “I want to help others find peace through exercise. It’s a sharing of a gift, in essence.”

Jones finished the fall semester with a 4.0 GPA and was named to the President’s Honor Roll. He finished his racing season last year with eight medals, including three second place finishes.

He celebrated one year of continuous sobriety on Feb. 24, 2020. He recently served as the keynote speaker at a Free Life AA group meeting in Shawnee.

Since enrolling at SSC, he has become active in several facets of student life. He spoke at the Martin Luther King Jr. program held at the College on Jan. 16. He works as a Peer Mentor for Student Support Services and regularly leads peer group discussions. On March 3, he will be added as a member to the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society at a ceremony on campus. He is also an active member of the Native American Student Association, and he is presently training to run the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon later this spring.

“I’m getting back to the path I was originally on. It started here at SSC. It’s incredible,” Jones said.

# SSC Delegation Attends Higher Ed Day

*SSC Students, employees and community supporters attended the event on Feb. 11.*



*SSC President's Leadership Class members deliver gift bags to legislators at the State Capitol.*

Seminole State College student Kimberly Cotter spoke to state leaders during the “Higher Education Day” program at the Capitol in Oklahoma City, Tuesday, Feb. 11. She, alongside students Ruth Herman, East Central University, and Natanya Hernandez, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, shared how higher education at Oklahoma’s public colleges and universities has positively impacted their lives. A large delegation of campus and community leaders representing Seminole State College attended. The event, sponsored by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE), is held annually to demonstrate grassroots support for Higher Education funding.

Speakers included: Matt Pinnell, Lieutenant Governor; Greg Treat, Senate President Pro Tempore; Rep. Jon Echols, Majority Floor Leader; Rep. Jadine Nollan; Chancellor Glen D. Johnson; and Jeanie Webb, Rose State College President, who serves as Chair of the Council of Presidents.

Prior to the afternoon program,

community and campus leaders representing Seminole State College were guests at a luncheon held at the Oklahoma University Faculty House. Legislators present included State Senators Darcy Jech and Ron Sharp. State Representatives in attendance were Logan Phillips, Danny Sterling and Zack Taylor. Other special guests were Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Chancellor Glen Johnson and OSRHE Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations LeeAnn McNally.

Following introductions by SSC President Lana Reynolds, the elected officials spoke to the SSC delegation about their support of higher education and their outlook on the new legislative session.

Community supporters in attendance included: Karel Brewster, Brewster and Associates; Mitch Enos, Seminole Chamber of Commerce Past President, Edward Jones Financial Representative; Randy Gilbert, Owner, Gilbert & Sons Trucking; Suzanne Gilbert, SSC Foundation Trustee Owner/Agent, Gilbert

Insurance Agency; Kim Hyden, SSC Regent, President of Gary A. Crain, Inc.; Dr. Donna Hardin, Retired SSC Professor; Jim Hardin, SSC Foundation Trustee, Retired Seminole County Treasurer; John Hargrave, SSC Foundation Trustee, President Emeritus of East Central University; Dr. Rebecca Kennedy, SSC Vice President Emeritus; Harrel Kennedy, Retired Higher Education Administrator; Chris Moore, SSC Foundation Trustee, BancFirst Seminole President; Curtis Morgan, Chair of SSC Board of Regents, Owner of Tiger Trucks; Pam Morgan, Retired City of Seminole Court Clerk; Jeramy Rich, SSC Foundation Trustee, Owner, Jeramy Rich Companies; Mark Schell, SSC Foundation Trustee, President of Security State Bank of Oklahoma; Lloyd Simmons, Former SSC Trojan Baseball Coach, Scout with Kansas City Royals; Andy Tucker, SSC Foundation Trustee and Okemah Economic Development Director; and Lance Wortham, SSC Foundation Chair and Owner of Shawnee Office Systems.

Several SSC students were in attendance. Members of the SSC President’s Leadership Class included were Connor Buchanan, Varnum; Kristen Casteel, Shawnee; Kandyce Davidson, Wewoka; Preston Davis, Oklahoma City; Kelsey Edminsten, Okemah; Candice Ervin, Moss; Tie Ehler, Davenport; Callen Golloway, Blanchard; Jerome Hilton, Maud; Hannah Lay, Earlsboro; Trevor Martin, Owasso; Tiffany Maxey, Catoosa;

Sydney McClaskey, Maud; Brady McEntire, Daingerfield, Texas; Is-



*SSC student Kimberly Cotter addresses legislators about how higher education has impacted her life.*

abella McGeisey, Shawnee; Shelby Moutaw, Strother; Charles Presley, Jr., Seminole; Nate Santiago, Southlake, Texas; Kenzie Sheldon, Prague; Carli Stafford, Wewoka; Rylee Treloar, Depew; Jace Wallace, Elmore City; Creed Watkins, Duncan; Sydney Whaley, Shawnee; Channing Wortham, Shawnee. SSC students Tijah Johnson, SSC Student Government President, Shawnee; and Kimberly Cotter, SSC Agriculture Student, Dale, were also in attendance.

College representatives present were: Jeff Cheng, Faculty Senate President; Tony Crouch, Vice President for Fiscal Affairs; Kristin Dunn, Director of Community Relations; Dr. Linda Goeller, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Bill Knowles, Vice President for Student Affairs; Steven Little, Marketing & Web Coordinator; and Lana Reynolds, President.

# Professor Completes Doctoral Program

Seminole State College Assistant Professor of English Dr. Andrew Davis recently completed his doctoral program at Oklahoma State University.

Dr. Davis completed his PhD in English with an emphasis in Screen Studies from OSU in December.

His dissertation, "Selling Queer Cinema: The Emergence and Decline of New Queer Cinema and its Impact on American and Transnational LGBTQ Cinemas (1990-2010)," examines the cultural and industrial shifts within American and transnational LGBTQ cinemas.

"The most challenging aspect of completing my doctorate was transitioning from the community environment of my classroom-based coursework to writing the dissertation on my own. Discussing my work with my peers and mentors and recognizing the relevancy of my work gave me the motivation to overcome this challenge and to see this endeavor to completion," Dr. Davis said.

Dr. Davis has been employed by SSC for nearly two years. Before completing his doctorate, he received his Masters of Arts in Gender and Cultural Studies at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts, and his Bachelor of Arts in English at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut.

He was a recipient of the Robberston Summer Dissertation Fellowship research grant in 2015, and has presented his research at a number of conferences including the Society



*Dr. Andrew Davis*

for Cinema and Media Studies and the National Popular Culture Association.

"Completing my dissertation while teaching here at SSC has allowed me to relate to my students as they embark on their own research projects within my Composition courses. I have been able to share my own strategies and techniques throughout the research process and demonstrate, by example, how these skills that they are learning can be applied to future coursework and professional development," Dr. Davis said.

In addition to teaching English courses at SSC, Dr. Davis also supervises the Writing House, a tutoring resource on campus that assists students with grammar, citations and many other aspects of writing. The Writing House is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.; and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

# SSC Hosts Financial Aid Chow Down



The Seminole State Financial Aid Department recently teamed up with the Student Support Services (SSS) and STEM Student Support Services (STEM SSS) grants to provide "Chow Down with Financial Aid." The informal event was provided in a relaxed atmosphere so students could have informational dialogue with financial aid staff. Pizza was provided to the students after a brief presentation about the best practices for applying for scholarships. More specific practices that were discussed included establishing references, citing activities, perusing legitimate web sites and reviewing the SSC scholarship application. Students also played an online quiz game.

Caitlin Brown, Financial Aid Specialist, said, "We love having an informal opportunity to interact with students. We find that students really enjoy learning about

the best way to apply for scholarships and how to find legitimate opportunities."

Janna Wilson-Byrd, Director of SSS / STEM SSS, said, "We truly enjoy working alongside Financial Aid. Our students seek knowledge about many financial aid topics and our Financial Aid team is always so willing to step in and assist with anything we request. This was a great event and we look forward to offering another one with Financial Aid in the very near future."

If you have questions about Federal Aid, please contact the Seminole State Financial Aid office at 405-382-9247.

SSS and STEM SSS serve first-generation, economically disadvantaged, and disabled students through two federal grants at SSC. For more information, please contact Wilson-Byrd at 405-382-9642 or visit [www.sscok.edu/ss](http://www.sscok.edu/ss).

# Ashcraft Attends Nigh Leadership Academy

***Cale Ashcraft recently received a George and Donna Nigh Public Service Scholarship.***

Area Seminole State College student Cale Ashcraft of Seminole, Okla. recently attended the Nigh Institute Leadership Academy held in Oklahoma City.

Ashcraft received a George and Donna Nigh Public Service Scholarship this year through the Nigh Institute program funded by the Oklahoma Legislature. During the leadership academy, students visited several state landmarks and attended sessions concerning Oklahoma's local government, government relations, the national election, public policy and Oklahoma's economic future.

In addition, the group visited the Regional Food Bank, Express Ranch, the OKC Memorial, the Oklahoma History Center, the Office of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the Oklahoma Gener-

al Contractors offices, Chesapeake Arena, OKC Golf and Country Club, Devon Petroleum, The Oklahoman and Tinker Air Force Base.

The group also had the privilege of meeting many of Oklahoma's leaders, including John Bobb-Semple, Senior Director of Community Impact at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma; Bobby Stem, President of the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors; Kelly Dyer-Frye, Editor-in-Chief at The Oklahoman; Dr. Glen Johnson, Chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education; Dr. Bob Blackburn, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Ashcraft is a 2019 Seminole High School graduate. At SSC, he is a freshman member of the President's Leadership Class.



*Pictured (l-r) Former Governor George Nigh, his wife Donna Nigh, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Chancellor Dr. Glen Johnson and Seminole State College freshman Cale Ashcraft, of Seminole, pose during a Nigh Institute Leadership Academy event on Feb. 10.*

## PLC Discovers Personality Traits



Members of the Seminole State College President's Leadership Class participated in a personality assessment training Feb. 27 with Jan Tipton, who works for Gateway to Prevention and Recovery in Shawnee. She presented on True Colors, an assessment that uses four colors to represent four styles of personality – green, blue, orange and gold. Tipton acted out each personality type for the group and then worked with the PLC members to discover their dominant color.



# SSC Regents Convene for February Meeting

***The Board of Regents approved a social media policy and tenure for a professor.***

At their meeting on Feb. 20, the Seminole State College Board of Regents approved tenure for a faculty member and adopted a social media policy for the College.

During the President's Report, Reynolds informed the Board about recent activities and events at the College.

With the first action item on the agenda, the Board approved tenure for Assistant Professor of Life Science Theran Hernandez. Hernandez was recommended for tenure by Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Linda Goeller. Hernandez began working for SSC in 2011 as part of the TRiO program and quickly thereafter transitioned to the role of coordinator for the Upward Bound Program. In 2012, she became an Educational Talent Search Advisor and also served as an adjunct instructor. She was hired as a full-time faculty member in 2015. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Langston University, a Master of Science from Grand Canyon University and a Master of Science from the University of Ne-

braska in Kearney. She is currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Langston University.

The Board then approved the second action item on the agenda, a social media policy for the College. This policy was established to comply with Senate Bill 198, which passed during the 2019 Legislative Session. Senate Bill 198 requires all state agencies to adopt a social networking policy to discourage abusive or offensive online behavior by employees, on state time and using state resources.

SSC's new policy reads, "All Seminole State College employees are discouraged from sharing content or creating comments on social media containing the following: obscene sexual content or links to obscene sexual content; abusive behavior and bullying language or tone; any unwelcomed discriminatory or harassing statements or images based on a protected characteristic that are so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively bars the victim's access to an educational opportunity or benefit; con-



*Regent Ray McQuiston, Regent Kim Hyden, Assistant Professor of Life Science Theran Hernandez, Regent Paige Sherry, Regent Marci Donaho and Chair Curtis Morgan pose for a photo following the SSC Board of Regents meeting on Feb. 20. The Board granted tenure to Hernandez during the meeting.*

duct or encouragement of illegal activity; and disclosure of information which an agency and its employees are required to keep confidential by law, regulation or internal policy."

Board members present at the meeting were: Chair Curtis Morgan,

Marci Donaho, Kim Hyden, Ray McQuiston and Paige Sherry.

The next meeting of the SSC Board of Regents is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2020.



## SSC Agriculture Students Visit OSU

Seminole State College students enrolled in the agriculture degree program visited Oklahoma State University in Stillwater on Feb. 27. Students had the opportunity to participate in multiple upper level agricultural course offerings at OSU.

"Our students shined when it came time for question-and-answer

and small group work in the class," Wendy Rich, SSC Assistant Professor of Agriculture, said.

The students concluded their visit with lunch and an informal discussion with OSU faculty regarding their agriculture leadership degree program and information about attending a four-year university.



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## Utterbacks Make Donation to Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex

Seminole State College President Emeritus Dr. Jim Utterback and his wife Karrie recently donated \$25,000 to the SSC Educational Foundation to assist with the construction of the Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex.

"Karrie and I are proud of all the sports programs at Seminole State College. Our kids grew up with Trojan baseball, traveling to Colorado with Coach Simmons and on spring break with Coach Myers. We believe in youth sports. Sports impart determination, teamwork, how to handle defeat and an array of similar life skills. We are proud to be a part of this exciting project," Dr. Utterback said.

At present, land clearing is still taking place at the site of the future sports complex.



*Pictured (l-r): SSC President Lana Reynolds, SSC President Emeritus Dr. Jim Utterback, Karrie Utterback and SSC Educational Foundation Chair Lance Wortham pose with a check commemorating the large donation.*