

# SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE **COLLEGIAN**

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## Submitting to The Collegian

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Stay up-to-date with all campus news by visiting [sscok.edu/media](http://sscok.edu/media). You can also view our collection of archives, which includes past issues of *The Collegian*.



NEVER MISS A GAME OF **SSC SPORTS**

Students and employees can attend every SSC athletic event for free with a campus ID. View sports schedules at [sscathletics.com](http://sscathletics.com).

## SSC to Host Night at the Lights

SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE

FREE FAMILY EVENT

# Night at the Lights

Reynolds Wellness Center

COOKIES HOT COCOA CRAFTS

**DEC 8**  
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Seminole State College will host its annual Night at the Lights on Monday, Dec. 8, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Reynolds Wellness Center in Seminole. This family-friendly event is free and open to the public. Guests can enjoy making holiday crafts with SSC students, exploring the "Snowman Wonderland" light display in Magnolia Park and savoring complimentary hot chocolate and cookies.

SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE

Classes begin **Jan. 12**

SPRING 2026

**ENROLL NOW**

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# SSC Business Students Win at ECU Competition



From left, Seminole State College Assistant Professor of Business and Entrepreneurs Club sponsor Brad Schatzel, Kara Doan of Frisco, Texas; Savannah Averitt of Seminole; Ava Freeze of Prague; Jentrie Gibson of Chandler; and Katie Simpson of Columbus, Kansas, gather at East Central University's Stonecipher School of Business in Ada following the Tiger Tank and Tiger Trak business competitions Nov. 12.

Five business students from Seminole State College traveled to the Stonecipher School of Business at East Central University in Ada on Nov. 12 to compete in a series of business-focused events. The team returned with a collection of awards and cash prizes ranging from \$25 to \$250.

The day began with the Tiger Tank business pitch competition, modeled after the television show "Shark Tank." Three SSC students presented their entrepreneurial ideas to a panel of judges. Katie Simpson of Columbus, Kansas, earned second runner-up for her pitch, Next Level Athletics, a sports training complex aimed at developing young athletes. Savannah

Averitt of Seminole and Ava Freeze of Prague took first place in the underclassmen division with their concept, Savalon, a full-service family salon with a welcoming, community-centered focus.

In the Tiger Trak stock trading challenge, where students manage a simulated \$1 million portfolio over the course of a month, SSC students also excelled. Jentrie Gibson, a sophomore from Chandler, earned second runner-up. Kara Doan of Frisco, Texas, claimed first place overall.

The event schedule featured morning pitches, a networking lunch and a guest entrepreneur lecture before the afternoon awards ceremony. Winners

received cash prizes in recognition of their work.

All five SSC students spent six weeks preparing for the competitions, including Wednesday lunch meetings dedicated to planning, research and presentation practice. They were accompanied by SSC Business Professor and Entrepreneurs Club sponsor Brad Schatzel, who praised their commitment.

"I am proud of these students; they prepared and performed well," Schatzel said.

The students' showing highlights the hands-on, real-world approach to SSC's business programs.

For more information about Seminole State College's business programs or student clubs, visit [sscok.edu](http://sscok.edu).

## Leadership Class Tours Chickasaw Cultural Center



Members of Seminole State College's President's Leadership Class (PLC) pause outside the Chickasaw Cultural Center during a guided tour in Sulphur, Oklahoma, on Nov. 4. The visit included the Chikasha Inchokka' Traditional Village, Inkana Bridge and the Chikasha Poya Exhibit Center.



PLC students join a Stomp Dance demonstration at the Chickasaw Cultural Center. The stomp dance, a treasured Chickasaw tradition that often begins with a Friendship Dance, features singers and dancers in traditional clothing, and visitors are encouraged to participate.





# SSC Receives Historic \$17 Million Gift From MacKenzie Scott's Yield Giving

Seminole State College has received a \$17 million unrestricted gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott through her foundation, Yield Giving, the largest single donation in the college's 94-year history.

The gift will be managed by the Seminole State College Educational Foundation, the college's nonprofit fundraising arm, and will be used to expand scholarships, strengthen student success initiatives, reward employee performance and advance key priorities outlined in SSC's 2023-26 strategic plan.

"This is a once-in-a-generation moment for Seminole State College," SSC President Lana Reynolds said. "MacKenzie Scott's extraordinary generosity is a powerful vote of confidence in our students, our mission and the communities we serve. This gift will allow us to remove financial barriers, build new pathways to degrees and careers, and ensure that more students from our region can thrive here at SSC."

Reynolds said the gift will touch nearly every part of the college's work, from affordability and academic quality to outreach and workforce development.

"Every decision we make with these

dollars will be filtered through our strategic plan and our commitment to student success," Reynolds said. "This gift will not replace the hard work of annual fundraising or state support, but it will give us the flexibility to act more boldly and more quickly on opportunities that change students' lives."

The \$17 million gift will be placed under the stewardship of the Seminole State College Educational Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 1972 to provide scholarship support and other resources to the college. The foundation supports SSC students through scholarships, economic development initiatives and facilities such as the Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex. The new gift will significantly increase the foundation's capacity to invest in students and campus priorities over the long term.

"MacKenzie Scott's generosity will reshape what is possible for our students and our community," said Mark Schell, chair of the SSC Educational Foundation Board of Trustees. "With this gift, the foundation can think in terms of decades rather than years. Our responsibility now is to steward these funds carefully, in a way that honors this donation, advances the

college's mission and ensures that Seminole State College remains strong for future generations."

Schell said the foundation expects to blend long-term endowment strategies with short-term investments in high-impact projects. He said the board will focus on balancing immediate student needs with building permanent resources that will sustain SSC well into the future.

SSC Board of Regents Chair Marci Donaho said the gift reflects outside partners' confidence in the college's leadership and direction.

"On behalf of the Board of Regents, I am deeply grateful to MacKenzie Scott and Yield Giving for investing in rural Oklahoma. These funds will help us keep a college education within reach, support innovative teaching and learning, and strengthen the pipeline of talent that our communities and employers depend on."

Donaho said the Board of Regents will work closely with the Educational Foundation and college leadership to ensure the funds are used transparently and responsibly.

Across the country, Scott has become a significant donor to higher education, particularly at institutions that serve large numbers of first-gener-

ation and low-income students. Since 2019, she has distributed billions of dollars.

Reynolds said SSC's strategic plan calls for investments in enrollment growth, technology, student support and community engagement.

"Whether it is a high school student earning concurrent credit, a parent finishing a degree or an adult learner retraining for a new career, this gift will touch the lives of learners across our region," Reynolds said. "It will allow us to live out our mission on a bigger scale — empowering people for academic success, personal development and lifelong learning."

Founded in 1931, Seminole State College is a public, two-year institution located in Seminole, Okla. The college offers associate degrees and certificates that prepare graduates to transfer to four-year universities or enter the workforce. SSC's service area includes Hughes, Lincoln, Okfuskee, Seminole and Pottawatomie counties.

The Seminole State College Educational Foundation provides scholarship support and capital resources that enhance the college's ability to serve students and the surrounding region.

For more information about Seminole State College, visit [sscok.edu](http://sscok.edu).



# Women's Soccer Achieves Top 4 Finish at Nationals



*Members of the Seminole State College women's soccer team gather for a photo on Nov. 14 in front of their bus before departing campus for Enid and the NJCAA Division I Women's Soccer National Tournament, where they went on to finish in the top four in the nation.*

Seminole State College's women's soccer team capped a historic 2025 season with a run to the NJCAA Division I Women's Soccer National Tournament semifinals in Enid. The Trojans finished the year 15-1-2, entering nationals as the No. 2 seed and leading all of NJCAA Division I women's programs with 93 goals scored.

Playing in their seventh consecutive national tournament, SSC opened pool play with a 1-0 win over Laramie County Community College, followed by a 2-0 victory over Navarro College to advance out of the group. The Trojans' season concluded with a narrow 1-0 loss to Arizona Western in the semifinal round at the Advance Soccer Complex, securing a top-four national finish.

Before departing for Enid, the team was honored with a campus send-off in the E.T. Dunlap Student Union, where Head Coach Dan Hill thanked students, faculty, staff and community members for their support of the team.

## SSC Welcomes High Schoolers for Campus Visit Day

*Seminole State College welcomed around 150 students for High School Visit Day on Nov. 5, with attendees from Agra, Butner, Harrah, Holdenville, Konawa, Macomb, McLoud, Paden, Prague, Sasakwa, Shawnee, Strother, Tecumseh, Varnum, Wanette and Wetumka. Breakout sessions included a Student Q&A Panel, Exploring Concurrent Enrollment, Campus Resources at SSC, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Tips for College Success, and Athletics at SSC.*





## Esports Team Caps Inaugural Season with Playoff Appearance



Members of the Seminole State College esports team pictured (left to right): Alexandria Flatt, Kashtin Wilson, Braden Carter, Joseph Mull, McCamey Jones, Daxton Likens and Croix Tucker. Not pictured is Destiny Branham.

Seminole State College's new esports team has completed its inaugural season in the National Junior College Athletic Association Esports (NJCAA), highlighted by a playoff run in Overwatch 2 and strong showings in Chess and Mario Kart.

SSC joined the NJCAA in October 2025 and currently competes in Division III. All members of the existing Esports Club tried out and earned a place on the competitive team. The club has been meeting in Tanner 202, a dedicated gaming space equipped with 24 gaming PCs and gaming chairs, with team practices held on Tuesdays and Fridays.

During the regular season, SSC student Joseph Mull competed in Chess, finishing 31st in NJCAA standings, while Alexandria Flatt raced in Mario Kart, placing 71st. SSC's Overwatch 2 squad, a five-player team, finished the

regular season ranked 16th nationally, earning a berth in the NJCAA post-season.

SSC faced the top-seeded team in the opening round on Nov. 12, 2025, ultimately falling in a hard-fought match and closing the season.

Because NJCAA rules allowed students to compete from home, all matches this year were played remotely while SSC's new esports lab was under development. The lab should be completed by March 2026, allowing students to practice and compete on campus. SSC also plans to hire an esports coach and a lab assistant in early 2026 to support competitive play, student training and day-to-day lab operations.

For more information about the SSC esports team, contact NASNTI Computer Science Specialist Alecia Bailey at [a.bailey@sscok.edu](mailto:a.bailey@sscok.edu).

## Military Resource Fair Draws Crowd



Seminole State College hosted its second annual Military and Veteran Resource Fair on Nov. 6 at the Enoch Kelly Haney Center on campus. The event drew dozens veterans and active service members seeking essential support and resources.

## Rep. Hill Tours SSC Campus



Rep. Brian Hill (R-Mustang) visited Seminole on Nov. 19 as part of a tour of Oklahoma's colleges and universities. An advocate economic development in rural areas of the State, Hill heard about recent infrastructure improvements, new businesses and housing expansion from a group of community leaders representing the City of Seminole, the Seminole Chamber of Commerce, the Seminole Economic Development Council and local financial institutions. Pictured seated (left to right) are: Steve Saxon, Shelly Pogue, Dana Miller and Lana Reynolds. Pictured standing: Mitch Enos, Mark Schell, Rep. Brian Hill, Chris Moore, Danny Morgan and Adam Baker.

# Former Trojan Part of New Banana Ball League

Baseball fans will be thrilled to learn that the highly entertaining “Savan-nah Bananas” have formed their own “Banana Ball” league. Banana Ball teams will be traveling to 75 stadiums in 45 states in the upcoming 2026 baseball season.

Former Seminole State College Trojan baseball team member Caden Green will be a member of one of six teams that make up the “Banana Ball Championship League.”

Caden began playing baseball as soon as he could walk. His dad, Sheldon Green, was usually one of his coaches as well as his biggest supporter.

Green played shortstop and second base for the SSC Trojans under Coach Mack Chambers from the fall of 2019 to the spring of 2022. During his time at SSC he was named to the Academic All American Team and was recognized as a Player of the Week. He spent the summer of ‘22 playing for the Savannah Bananas before completing his college baseball career at Auburn University. After graduation Caden played for the Great Falls (Montana) Voyagers, a minor league baseball team.

Caden’s sister, Kinley, is currently a member of the Seminole State Trojans softball team, playing outfield. She is also a power hitter.

For those who don’t know, Banana Ball is a new take on baseball, with some additional rules to help pick up the pace as well as some very entertaining trick plays and other fun and surprising additions. It is often compared to what the Harlem Globetrot-

ters brought to basketball.

For example, if a fan catches a foul ball it counts as an out. Every inning is worth one point. The team that gets the most runs in an inning, gets a point for that inning, except for the last inning, where every run counts.

Batters are often escorted to the batters box by a celebrity music artist or make some other dramatic entrance. And every game has a “3-2-2,” or third inning, second batter, second pitch, when the team breaks into a choreographed dance. You never know how the team will celebrate a score, which can include running through the crowd or an exceptionally impressive dance routine.

The Savannah Bananas were formed in October 2015 as a college summer team with the goal of taking the boredom out of baseball, make it fun and bring fans back to Grayson Stadium after minor league baseball left the Georgia city.

The team was part of the collegiate Coastal Plain League for seven seasons before announcing in 2022 they were leaving to play Banana Ball year-round.

Banana Ball has continued to rapidly grow in popularity, and in 2025 attracted over 2 million fans and sold out 17 Major League Baseball stadiums.

The organization, Fans First Entertainment, recently announced they now have six independent professional teams and have formed the Banana Ball Championship League.

This announcement was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm. Over

*This article was originally published by the Seminole Producer on Nov. 12. It has been reprinted with permission. Story by Bob Melton, County Editor.*



Caden Green

150 cities expressed interest in hosting the Banana Ball Championship League inaugural season, with over 75 percent of the top 50 media markets submitting proposals and 50 cities seeking to host two of the brand-new Banana Ball teams.

In addition to the Bananas, there is also the Firefighters. Caden was a member of this new team when they debuted in October 2023 as part of the 2024 season launch. The Firefighters wear firefighter-themed uniforms that include firefighter helmets

Other teams in the league include the Party Animals, Texas Tailgaters,

Loco Beach Coconuts and the Indianapolis Clowns.

This exciting new professional exhibition league is certain to add many new adventures to Caden’s already impressive list of accomplishments. This includes playing in some of the nation’s most renowned ballparks, including Houston, Boston, Washington D.C., Cleveland, Philadelphia, Miami, and New York.

To learn more about Banana Ball, including their history, rules, teams, schedule and much more, visit the [bananaball.com](http://bananaball.com) website.



# Grandin Speaks on Animal Welfare, Reaching All Learners at SSC

On Nov. 10, students, faculty and community members filled the Jeff Johnston Auditorium at Seminole State College for “An Afternoon with Temple Grandin.” The renowned animal behaviorist and advocate for neurodiversity appeared via Zoom, presenting “Animal Welfare Presented Through the Lens of Autism,” a talk that braided the two themes that have defined her career: humane livestock handling and opening doors for visual and hands-on thinkers. The event was made possible by SSC’s Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions federal grant program, which is funded in the amount of \$450,000 annually.

Grandin has spent five decades turning a different way of seeing into a different way of solving problems. A distinguished professor of animal science at Colorado State University for more than 30 years, she earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Franklin Pierce, a master’s in animal science from Arizona State University and a doctorate in animal science from the University of Illinois. Diagnosed with autism, she has written extensively about how sensory differences and visual thinking shaped her approach to problem-solving — insights that have guided both her scholarship and her teaching.

That perspective started with chores rather than charts.

“So basically it was exposure to cattle as a teenager,” Grandin said in a

phone interview before the event. “My boarding school had a small dairy. I learned to milk cows there. And then when I was 15, I had a chance to go out to my aunt’s ranch in Arizona. That got me exposed to the beef industry. I can’t emphasize how important it is for students to get exposed to different things in order to get interested in them.”

Her most visible impact is in stockyards and processing plants. Close observation of animal behavior led her to design curved chutes, make lighting adjustments and champion low-stress handling practices that reduce fear and injuries in cattle and pigs. The habit of seeing what animals see crystallized in graduate school.

“The first thing I did when I got out to the feed yards in Arizona was to get in the chutes and see what the cattle were seeing,” she said. “I noticed that they would stop at shadows and water puddles and a piece of rope or something hanging down. At the time, I did not know that I was a visual thinker. I just assumed that everybody was a visual thinker.”

The field lessons weren’t all triumphs. Grandin is quick to point to a failure that taught her to chase root causes instead of symptoms. In the 1980s, she designed a conveyor to help pigs reach an upper floor at a processing plant. “It was a failure,” she said. “And this thing failed and it flipped the pigs over backwards.

It was a real mess. And one of

the things I learned from that is you have to treat root causes of problems. Only certain pigs were not capable of walking up the big ramp. They had a genetic problem called spraddle leg. You need to treat root causes of problems, not symptoms of problems.”

That insistence on root causes maps directly onto her classroom message: the world needs all kinds of minds, and colleges should provide multiple on-ramps to mastery. “I think one of the worst things the schools have done is taking all the practical classes out,” she said. “I’d put those classes back in. Sewing, cooking, shop.”

Grandin links these practical steps to a broader talent strategy. “We actually have a huge shortage of people in skilled trades,” she said, noting employers who need mechanics with strong mechanical aptitude. She has known welders and machinists who “could build anything,” including even if they didn’t understand algebra. The people who thrive in those shops are often the same ones who struggled with timed tests. “I like to see them get out in the trades. They’re going to have a job,” she said. “I was one of those students. I failed the SAT in math and just got a mediocre score in the verbal. And I get very nervous during tests.

Research in higher education backs up pieces of Grandin’s case. Lab-rich instruction and project-based learning can increase persistence, particularly for first-generation



*Dr. Temple Grandin*

students and those from underrepresented groups in STEM. Portfolios and internships regularly show up in employer surveys as better predictors of early-career success than standardized test scores.

“It didn’t change teaching or research that much, but it sure changed my travel schedule,” she said. A new documentary, “An Open Door,” focusing on her teaching and recent work, released earlier this year.

Back in the Jeff Johnston Auditorium, even through a screen, her call was unmistakable: build on-ramps for all kinds of thinkers. Tie math to machines, theory to tools and assessment to the work itself. For students imagining careers in animal science, pre-veterinary studies, biology, engineering technology or the skilled trades, Grandin’s trajectory is a blueprint for turning curiosity into a career.