

# SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE **COLLEGIAN**

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## NEW DIRECTOR OF NURSING NAMED

Ann Benson took on the role beginning in January. [Page 3](#)

## TROJANS HOST FIRST PITCH BANQUET

The event introduced this year's squad and honored alumni. [Page 7](#)

# Submitting to The Collegian

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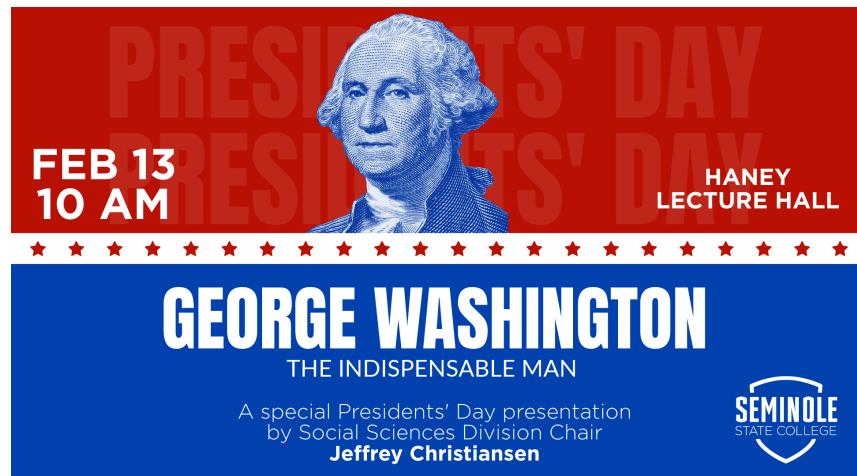
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NEVER MISS A GAME OF **SSC SPORTS**

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 Presidents' Day Program on George Washington



Seminole State College will host a Presidents' Day presentation, "George Washington: The Indispensable Man," on Friday, Feb. 13. Social Sciences Division Chair Jeffrey Christiansen will lead the program at 10 a.m. in the Haney Lecture Hall.

"This program will examine the unique and unrivaled importance of George Washington to the success of the American Revolution and the founding of the United States as a

constitutional republic," Christiansen said. The presentation will cover Washington's command of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War to his support of the new federal constitution and eight years of service as the nation's first president, including his command of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

The event is open to students, employees and community members.

**SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE**

**Apply for Fall 2026 Scholarships Now**



Deadline: **March 2**

**THE COLLEGIAN**

**FEBRUARY 2026**

# Benson Named Director of SSC Nursing Program

Seminole State College has named Ann Benson as the new director of the College's Nursing Program. Benson began her duties Jan. 5.

Benson has worked at SSC for four years. During her time at the College, she has taught Psychosocial Nursing and the Nursing Leadership capstone course. She has also taught Maternal, Newborn and Pediatrics and served one semester as a Medical Surgical I clinical instructor.

"I am a firm believer in the nursing program at SSC and the impact it has on our students' lives," Benson said. "I have seen firsthand how this program changes the trajectory of students—both professionally and personally. Many of our students come from rural Oklahoma and have a strong desire to stay here, serve their neighbors, and care for their hometown communities. What excites me most about this role is the opportunity to support and strengthen a program that not only prepares excellent nurses, but also helps sustain health care in the communities that need it most."

Benson earned her Bachelor of Nursing from the University of Oklahoma. She completed her Women's Health Nurse Practitioner certification at Southwestern Medical College in Dallas, Texas, and received her Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Phoenix.

As a campus leader, Benson is a member of the SSC Faculty Senate and previously served on the Faculty Welfare Committee.

"I want SSC's nursing program to



Ann Benson

be known across the state for producing highly trained, compassionate and professional nurses," Benson said. "Our graduates should be recognized not only for their strong clinical skills, but also for the empathy, integrity and professionalism they bring to patient care. My goal is for employers to see an SSC nurse and immediately associate that name with excellence, dedication and a commitment to serving others."

In the community, Benson is a member of Beta Sigma Phi civic sorority, serves on the board of directors for the Prague Kolache Festival and

is a member of First Baptist Church of Prague, where she teaches Sunday school.

Benson was named an Oklahoma Public Health Leadership Institute Fellow in 2011 and was recognized as the March of Dimes Pediatric/Adolescent Nurse of the Year in 2013.

"SSC nursing plays a vital role in strengthening both the regional workforce and overall health outcomes," Benson said. "Many of our students live in these communities and surrounding areas. They are raising their families here, putting down roots, and they genuinely want their com-

munities to be as strong and healthy as possible. By educating nurses who stay and serve locally, we help address workforce needs while also improving continuity of care."

She and her husband, Bryan Benson, have been married 43 years and make their home in Prague. They have two children and five grandchildren. Their sixth grandchild is expected in February.

## Nursing Program at a Glance

**Total hours:** 70 credit hours minimum

**Clinical experience:** 484 clinical hours in Med-Surg Clinical I, Maternal/Newborn, Med-Surg Clinical II, Psychosocial, and Leadership.

## Minimum standards (college applicants):

2.50 GPA in 12+ applicable credit hours and a minimum grade of C in NURS 1104 and BIOL 1214

**Accredited** by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)

**Approved** by the Oklahoma Board of Nursing

Out-of-State Recruiting? Belles Don't Need It

## Scholarship Awaits Juco Star

## Doors Open Up For Girl Cager

By Rich Sambol  
A Member of the Sports Staff

It might not be too bad of an idea for some school to take the whole team. After yesterday's victory over Sherri Sandburg (Ill.) College, Seminole's record stood at 23-2. The only two blemishes are losses to Phillips University and Wayland Baptist, both 4-year schools.

Nevada-Las Vegas, Pam said, has also offered scholarships to Sherri Hudlow, Belinda Candler and Cindy Perkins. So the team must be good, and it is.

"Most of them are sophomores," Dixie said, "and that gives them confidence." Seminole, which is where Willie Smith played for two seasons before moving on to Missouri and helping the Tigers to the Big Eight men's title this season, was the fourth-place finisher last year in the first national women's juco tournament.

Women's basketball is catching on. Dixie can sense it, see the difference from her playing days.

"The women's movement has made the difference," she said. "There were 14 schools playing for the spot we got in this tournament, so you can image how many girls were left back home."

Tournament directors at Johnson County can sense it, too. The tournament didn't make money last year but they wanted it again, with the idea the community college would become the tournament's permanent home.

And give young women like Pam, who said she just likes basketball, an opportunity for bigger and better things.

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## Seminole Girls Have Winning Formula

By Dixie Woodall

**Seminole**—The formula for winning a national championship easily includes recruiting basketball stars from across the country, having superior facilities to attract such players, strong local support and a history from average starts.

Seminole Junior College is about the last two of that formula, but that didn't stop the Belles from winning to the women's national junior college basketball championship last week at Overland Park, Kan.

Coach Dixie Woodall doesn't recruit much nationally. In fact, only three non-Oklahomans have played for her in the past at Seminole, and the national champions are all products of Oklahoma high schools.

Fortunate? **NOT MUCH** does have a new year in which to play its game. It didn't have a game, practice, two years ago. Seven other schools had to play across the highway from the Overbuilding school!

The Belles do have support, though. Some 150 Seminoles fans invited to Overland Park, just outside Kansas City, for the championship game last Saturday night when the Belles beat Jackson, Mich., 70-62. They played before non-explosive crowds of home.

As far as the letter from average coach is concerned, Miss Woodall's teams are 41-11 over the last two years and she was invited women's coach of the year following last week's tournament.

"We've got to want to win and we did," Miss



Dixie Woodall

Belinda Candler

Woodall said Friday afternoon after returning from an NJCAA organizational meeting in Dallas, Tex., and before leaving for New Haven Friday night to watch the women's national JUCO tournament at College.

"Our girls are winners at heart. Winners are afraid to lose and losers are afraid to win and

that's the way we play."

Seven of the 11 Belles are former Oklahoma JUCO selections and nine are on the developmental staff.

Belinda Candler, in her second sophomore year, was the team's leading scorer this season with a 22-point average and was most valuable player in the national tournament.

Other standouts on the team were sophomore Pam Perkins of Beggs and Cindy Perkins of El Reno, both honorable mention all-tournament, and Michael sophomore Shanti Hudlow, a first-team all-tournament selection.

"There's no jealousy among the girls. They get along real well—just like a family," said Dixie Woodall. "I guess you have to really like each other to sleep six in a 27 by 30 trailer."

Miss Woodall reports that her competition in recruiting comes not only from the state's 31 junior colleges but also from four-year schools like Phillips, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State, and state-state colleges as well.

"Schools in the surrounding states are like Oklahoma's top players and a lot of times get them. I usually make no contact with a player and my no sell her on our program. I don't like to hog the star, so if they're not interested it's I forget 'em."

Recruiting has been a chore, considering next year will be the first. Miss Woodall will be able to offer full scholarships. In the past, only tuition was paid and a small fee was charged to live in the trailers.

And, in most cases, they'll likely win.

"The girl told me her closest of home was larger than the dormitory she had to share with another girl here. She wasn't living dormitory, but that's the way it is and it makes it hard sometimes to tell the parents."

But hard work pays off, or so they say, and the Belles' 36-2 record this season has by far the best in the nation for junior girls. Their effort included a 32 mark against four-year schools.

They rank with defending small college champion Phillips and also honored with perennial power Wayland College of Plainview, Tex.

"With the four-year schools getting stronger we may have to eat down on our recruiting them," Dixie Woodall said. "But as long as we have good players like we did this year, we'll play anybody."

And, in most cases, they'll likely win.

## In 6 days something good is going to happen.

And McKinley is going to do it.

mckinley properties



**VICTORIOUS SJC BELLES** are shown here with all the trophies including one of the nets from the Kerr Activity Center basketball goals which they garnered Wednesday night at Ada by winning the Region II NJCA women's division title. Front row, left to right: Carter, McAlvain, Sherri Hudlow, Belinda Candler, and Teresa

Carothers with goal net. Back Row, left to right: James McAlvain, bus driver and SJC faculty escort for the Belles, Sherri Hudlow, Belinda Candler holding MVP and all tournament team member trophies. Coach Dixie Woodall, Cindy Perkins

THE COLLEGIAN

Knights, Story on Page 6. —(SJC Photo by Jeff Cherry)

## Seminole Star Takes M.V.P.

Belinda Candler was named most valuable player in the National Women's Junior College Basketball Tournament after leading **Seminole (Okla.)** to an 83-74 victory over Jackson (Mich.) in the final Saturday night.

Sherri Hudlow of **Seminole** joined her teammate on the all-tournament team, which also included Sarah Williams and Cathy Burns of Weatherford (Tex.), Debbie Houg and Terry Helgeson of Northern Iowa, Debra Thomas and Connie Swearington of Panola (Tex.), Carol Gamble and Cindy Perry

FEBRUARY 2026

Cleveland State (Tenn.).



The banners tell part of the story.  
The people who lived it are coming  
home to tell the rest.

Seminole State College will recognize members of its 1976 national championship women's basketball team — the Belles who delivered the school's first national team title — during an on-court ceremony at the team's home game Monday, Feb. 16.

Several players from that team and coach Dixie Woodall are expected to attend. The game is set for 5:30 p.m. at Seminole State, which hosts Northern Oklahoma College-Tonkawa. Admission is free.

The 1976 Belles stamped their

place in school history with a 36-2 season and an NJCAA Women's Basketball National Tournament championship in Kansas. Seminole's tournament run included wins over Carl Sandburg (Illinois), DuPage (Illinois), Panola (Texas) and Jackson (Michigan), capped by an 83-74 victory over Jackson in the national final.

Woodall helped shape the program into a national force in its early years, compiling a 390-97 record over 14 seasons. In addition to the 1976 title, her teams finished national runner-up in 1975 and 1977.

In a 1976 interview, Woodall boiled the team's edge down to mindset:

"Our girls are winners at heart. Winners are afraid to lose ... and that's the way we play."

The college is also inviting former Belles players and coaches from across eras to attend as part of the anniversary recognition. Seminole State said fans can expect commemorative giveaway items during the evening.

The program began in 1971 — backed by a \$10,000 donation from the Blue Bell sewing plant, which is now Wrangler/Kontoor Brands. A year before Title IX, Seminole became the first junior college program in Oklahoma to award basketball scholarships to women.

# Reynolds Named Oklahoma Academy Chair



BancFirst President and CEO Darryl Schmidt (left) passes the gavel to Seminole State College President Lana Reynolds (right) as Reynolds assumes the role of 2026 Oklahoma Academy chair during the Academy's annual business meeting Jan. 16 in Oklahoma City.

Seminole State College President Lana Reynolds has been named chair of the Oklahoma Academy for 2026. She assumed the role during the Academy's Board of Directors' annual business meeting on Jan. 16 in Oklahoma City. Reynolds succeeds BancFirst President and CEO Darryl Schmidt.

The Oklahoma Academy is a statewide organization that brings people together to learn about key public policy issues, consider nonpartisan research and discuss practical solutions that strengthen Oklahoma's communities. The Academy has more than 500 members and focuses on educating Oklahomans about the major public policy issues so they can take an active role in civic life at the local and state levels.

The Academy describes its work as raising awareness of issues, providing evidence-based research and creating space for civil discourse and consensus-building.

Reynolds is in her ninth year as president of Seminole State College and has worked in Oklahoma higher education for more than 35 years.

She is a past chair of Leadership Oklahoma and currently serves on the boards of the Oklahoma Children's Health Foundation, the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and Oklahoma Christian University. She is also a member of the national board of the Rural Community College Alliance.

Reynolds is a past chair of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Council of Presidents, as well as a past chair of the Council of Two-Year Presidents.

She is a past president of the Jasmine Moran Children's Museum Board of Trustees, the Seminole Rotary Club and the Seminole Chamber of Commerce. She was selected as Seminole's Citizen of the Year in 1991 and inducted into the Seminole Hall of Fame in 2024.

# Women's Self-Defense Class Set for Feb. 7



Trade the usual Galentine's plans for something empowering: Seminole State College will host a Women's Self-Defense Class at 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7, at Alexander Jiu-Jitsu, 2132 Smith St., Seminole, OK. The session is open to all fitness levels, and no experience, partner or special preparation is required. The cost is \$30 per person.

The beginner-friendly class will be taught by Steven Alexander and Ethan Newell and will cover simple, practical techniques designed to build confidence and increase comfort in everyday situations.

"Galentine's Day is all about celebrating friendship, and this is a great way to do that while learning something that can truly help you feel more confident," said Talina Lee,

SSC Business and Industry Coordinator. "Participants will learn practical moves, build awareness, and walk away with tools they can remember and use."

The importance of safety education is reflected in national data. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 1 in 5 women in the United States have experienced contact sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

"Self-defense isn't about being fearless — it's about being prepared," Lee said. "Even learning a few basics can help participants feel more in control and more comfortable in everyday settings."

For more information, contact Talina Lee at [t.lee@sscok.edu](mailto:t.lee@sscok.edu) or (405) 382-9546.

# Baseball Kicks Off Season with First Pitch Banquet



Seminole State College celebrated the start of the 2026 Trojan Baseball season with its annual Trojan First Pitch Banquet on Saturday, Jan. 31, at 6:30 p.m. in the Enoch Kelly Haney Center.

This year's guest speaker was Chris Schroder, a former Trojan baseball player and SSC Hall of Fame member. Schroder served as executive director of the Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma (ACCO). In his role, he oversaw the day-to-day operations of ACCO, including providing counties with property and liability coverage and workers' compensation coverage, legislative advocacy, training programs for county commissioners and staff, and planning and hosting three conferences annually. Schroder had worked for the association since 2011 and was named executive director in 2021.

While at Seminole State College, Schroder pitched for the Trojans baseball team. He completed his associate degree in 1999 and then attended Oklahoma City University. Following graduation, he went on to play professional baseball, including time

with the Washington Nationals from 2001 to 2008, the Oakland Athletics in 2009 and the Florida Marlins in 2010. He was inducted into the Oklahoma City University Sports Hall of Fame in 2008.

Schroder was active in his community as a member of the Guthrie Public Schools Board of Education, a Dispute Resolution Advisory Board member, a diaconate at the First Christian Church of Guthrie and a coach for his daughters' softball and basketball teams. He resided in Guthrie.

"This banquet was a special tradition for Trojan Baseball," SSC Head Baseball Coach Mack Chambers said. "It was an opportunity to recognize the legacy of the program, celebrate anniversary teams and build excitement for the season ahead while bringing alumni and supporters back together."

During the banquet, the Trojan baseball program honored the 1985-86, 1995-96, 2005-06 and 2015-16 teams for their 40th, 30th, 20th and 10th anniversaries, and introduced the 2026 Trojan team.



*Former Trojan baseball player and SSC Hall of Fame member Chris Schroder addresses attendees during Seminole State College's annual Trojan First Pitch Banquet Jan. 31.*



*SSC Head Baseball Coach Mack Chambers introduces the 2026 Trojans and shares a preview of the team's upcoming season during the event.*

# Board of Regents Extend President's Contract

The Seminole State College Board of Regents convened Thursday, Jan. 15, for its monthly meeting in the Enoch Kelly Haney Center Board Room. Prior to the meeting, regents toured SSC's new esports lab in the David L. Boren Library and learned about the program.

During the meeting, SSC President Lana Reynolds shared personnel and campus activity updates and introduced "SSC 2025: At a Glance," a publication that offers a quick overview of the last year, campus accomplishments and the College's top news stories. The Board's first action item was the review and consideration of a recommendation to enter into a contract with Finley & Cook, PLLC for professional auditing services. Seminole State College is required by state statute to obtain a new external auditor every five years, and the FY2025 audit marked the College's fifth year with its previous auditing firm. The Board approved the recommendation.

The second action item was the review of President Reynolds' employment. In accordance with Board Policy, the President is evaluated each year prior to the January meeting. The evaluation process is conducted according to the wishes of the Board Chair. Nine years ago, Reynolds was named to the position of President, beginning her tenure in July of 2017.

President Reynolds met with a

committee of the Board, composed of Chair Marci Donaho and Regents Curtis Morgan and Robyn Ready, on Jan. 13 to review performance and discuss challenges and successes of the last year, as well as to establish goals for the coming year.

The Board retired into executive session to discuss President Reynolds' evaluation and contract. When the Board returned to public session, her contract was extended with no changes. Reynolds declined a salary increase, citing the institution's inability to award across-the-board pay increases last July.

"President Reynolds has provided steady, student-focused leadership while continuing to enhance academic programs and community partnerships," Donaho said. "The Board appreciates the progress made over the past year, and we are confident in the direction of the College as we move forward."

President Reynolds said, "I'm grateful to the Board for its continued confidence and for the opportunity to keep serving Seminole State College. I'm committed to the goals we've set for the year ahead as we continue investing in students, supporting employees and strengthening our campus community."

The next SSC Board of Regents meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026.



*The SSC Board of Regents extended President Lana Reynolds' contract at their meeting on Jan. 15. Pictured (seated, l-r): President Reynolds, Chair Marci Donaho; (standing, l-r) Regents Ryan Franklin, Robyn Ready, Mona Adkisson, Teresa Burnett and Curtis Morgan.*

## Area Math Teachers Attend Calculator Training



*SSC's GEAR UP federal grant program hosted a TI-Nspire calculator training for area math teachers on Jan. 15 in the Enoch Kelly Haney Center Ballroom. Teachers from Holdenville, Moss, Varnum, Wewoka and Wetumka attended the Texas Instruments-led session focused on high school math readiness and classroom-ready tools.*