

# SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE

## COLLEGIAN

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## Submitting to The Collegian

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## All-Star Coach



Seminole State College Softball Coach Amber Flores was selected to coach in the Alliance All-Star Game on July 27 at Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City. The game featured the top 50 High School players in the nation and was broadcast live on ESPN. Flores, who is beginning her 9th year at Seminole, was named NJCAA Region II Coach of Year in 2021 and led the Trojans to the JUCO World Series in Yuma, Arizona, where the team finished 4th in the nation.

## Touring Campus



Seminole State College President's Leadership Class students toured campus during their orientation on Aug. 13 and participated in a photo scavenger hunt. Jaycee Johnson, Prague; Frank Bourlon, Bethel; Anna Kelsey, Tecumseh; Cynthia Bui, Shawnee; and Erin Bronson, Shawnee snap a shot of the flagpole in front of the main classroom building – Tanner Hall.



Stay up to date with campus COVID-19 safety precautions at SSC's Coronavirus Response page.

Here you'll find important updates, CARES Act scholarship information, mental health resources and links to Centers for Disease Control data.

Explore the Response Page [here](#).

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# Welcome Week Kicks Off Fall Semester



As students returned to campus for the beginning of the fall semester, Seminole State College hosted its annual Welcome Week, featuring activities and giveaways each day. On Tuesday, students were able to create their own street signs at a station just outside of the E.T. Dunlap Student Union.



Welcome Week continued with “Waffle Wednesday,” where students were treated to waffles on a stick with an assortment of toppings. Welcome Week programming also included caricature drawings, free movie nights at Strothers Cinema and snow cones from Kona Ice.

Student Column

## Overcoming Loneliness

by Georgia Ledford



My first day of Seminole State College, I wasn't fearful of others' judgment, as we introduced ourselves to the class, giving cheesy “three fun facts about me” speeches. I wasn't fearful of being late to class, instilling the first impression that I was lazy or incompetent. I wasn't fearful of being underdressed or overdressed, or if my backpack straps would fit tightly enough, or if my brand-new notebooks and stationery would be considered trendy.

No, the only true fear that I experienced throughout the day was loneliness. It wasn't necessarily the fear of awkward introductions and halfhearted conversations, rather it was the fear that somebody else would never approach me. Perhaps, it was the fear that I would be too reluctant to approach anybody else as well. It was the fear that at the end of the day, I would still feel as lonely as when it had begun.

Some of us may feel lonely on our first day of college, simply because it's how we've felt our entire lives. Some of us never received the picture-perfect friend groups in high school. Some of us were constantly made out to be the joke, the punchline. Some of us weren't the “favorites” of the group, some of us always third-wheeled, and some of us may have been too socially awkward to even attempt to make friends at all. Perhaps you have your own personal loneliness that stems from similar experiences that I've gone through. Perhaps you've left all your best pals behind in your hometown, or they're going to a different college. Maybe you already know people on

campus, but you've left behind your family at home, or your pets, or even a familiar face such as a grocery cashier or a mailman who always made you smile.

Everyone has felt some variation of loneliness. Major life events, such as everyone's first day of college, can often accentuate the feeling of loneliness. With all of this in mind, I have two pieces of advice to give:

1. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself. Take the risk, and if it fails miserably, go take another risk with another stranger.

2. If you don't yet have the courage to introduce yourself to others, introduce yourself to, well, yourself.

Introduce yourself to yourself by learning to love your surroundings. For example, I've learned to love the sounds of cicada bugs mingling with the wind on my afternoon walk to my car. I've learned to love Ticonderoga pencils over any other brand, because they feel better to write with. I've learned to love how smooth the new parking lot is to drive over and mentally thank the construction workers for their great job. I've learned to love random strangers' outfits. I've learned to love the way light pours through the windows at the library, and I've learned to love the feeling of sipping a coffee and writing this very article in the booths at the Student Union.

Humans are often afraid to be lonely because they are afraid of never experiencing love. I've learned to seek love not only from people, but also from my surroundings, and ultimately from myself.

# Talent Search Program Awarded \$3.3 Million in Federal Grants



Members of Talent Search team pose for a photo commemorating the federal grants the program received. Pictured: (left to right) Advisor – Central Damaris Haney, Advisor – Central Angela Harjo, Advisor – West Tina Savage, Director Mary Ann Hill, Advisor – West Lauren Buie and Advisor – Central Christy Abbott.

The U.S. Department of Education recently awarded the Seminole State College Talent Search Program two grants totaling approximately \$3,329,000.

Talent Search – West will receive \$277,375 annually for the next five years, beginning Sept. 1, 2021. Talent Search – West serves 500 students across six schools in Seminole and Pottawatomie Counties: Earlsboro, Macomb, Maud, McLoud, Shawnee and Tecumseh. Lauren Buie and Tina Savage are the Talent Search advisors for the region.

Talent Search – Central will receive \$388,326 for five years, beginning Sep. 1, 2022. Talent Search – Central serves 700 students across 10 schools in Seminole and Okfuskee Counties: Bowlegs, Butner, Justice, New Lima, Paden, Sasakwa, Seminole, Strother,

Varnum and Wewoka. Talent Search advisors for the region are Damaris Haney, Angela Harjo and Christy Abbott.

The grant application process was spearheaded by Talent Search Director Mary Ann Hill.

The Talent Search Program identifies qualified high school and middle school students with potential for education at the postsecondary level and encourages them to complete high school and pursue higher education. The SSC programs provide monthly workshops, tutoring, camps, campus tours, and assistance in applying for college and financial aid.

Talent Search is part of what is known as TRIO, educational programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education. These programs

were started to provide educational opportunity to all Americans regardless of race, ethnic background or economic circumstance. The programs are funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Seminole State College's FOCUS/Educational Talent Search Program serves students from the 6th through the 12th grades.

"These grants provide valuable services to our students across our service area – many times giving them the support they need to attend and complete college. We are very appreciative of our Congressional delegation, particularly Senator James Lankford and Congresswoman Stephanie Bice, for working with the U.S. Department of Education to bring these dollars home to Oklahoma," President Lana Reynolds said.

## Author and Filmmaker Presents to Campus



LeAnne Howe

LeAnne Howe, an author and filmmaker, spoke to the Seminole State College campus community on Aug. 19 via Zoom, the video conference software. The event was organized and hosted by SSC's Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) program.

Howe is a poet, novelist, playwright, filmmaker and a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Her latest documentary film *Searching for Sequoyah*, produced with James M. Fortier will air in November on PBS-affiliated stations across the U.S. The film is the culmination of a five-year journey into Mexico following in the footsteps of Sequoyah, the inventor of the Cherokee Syllabary.

Howe was born and raised in Oklahoma and is the Eidson Distinguished Professor of American Literature in English at the University of Georgia. Her latest works include *Famine Pots: The Choctaw Irish Gift Exchange 1847-Present*, and *When The Light of The World Was Subdued, Our Songs Came Through: A Norton Anthology of Native Nations Poetry*.

## Governor Stitt Visits Campus



Gov. Kevin Stitt made a stop at Seminole State College during a tour of Seminole County to speak with local business and community leaders on Aug. 31

## Congresswoman Bice Speaks With Students



U.S. Congresswoman Stephanie Bice (second from left) visited with several members of the Seminole State College President's Leadership Class during a visit to campus on Aug. 18. The Congresswoman, who represents Oklahoma's 5th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, was in Seminole to visit with community leaders and tour local businesses. Students pictured (left to right) are: Brandon Gomez, Oklahoma City; Kendra Lewis, Bowlegs; Allyson Randall, Okemah; and Emily Dobbins, Broken Arrow.

## College to Offer LPN to RN Online Degree Program



Nursing Program Director Crystal Bray leads a discussion with her students. SSC will soon offer an LPN to RN online degree program.

Seminole State College Nursing recently received approval from the Oklahoma Board of Nursing to start a new LPN to RN online option.

"We are so excited to start this option. There is a huge need in this area for LPN's to advance their degree and still be able to work," Nursing Program Director Crystal Bray said. "Most of our traditional options require students to be on campus three to four days per week. It is very difficult for working LPNs to arrange a work schedule to accommodate both school and work."

SSC is one of the few colleges in the state to offer this option to LPNs.

"With current and anticipated nursing shortages, it is more vital than ever to help get more registered nurses into the workforce, and we are proud to be a part of making that happen for our area healthcare partners," SSC President Lana Reynolds said.

The program will still need approval from the Accreditation

Commission for Education in Nursing and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education before starting, but both approvals are anticipated to be granted soon.

The SSC Nursing Program hopes to launch the online course this November. Students will need to complete five online nursing courses to complete their degree. The program will take approximately 10 months to complete. Students will take all components of the program online with the exception of clinical days. Clinical days will be in a face-to-face format at a local healthcare facility.

To apply to the program, students may need general education courses, most of which are also offered online. They will also need to pass a Health Education Systems Incorporated exam with a score of 850 or greater.

The deadline to apply is Oct 1, 2021. For more information call the SSC Nursing Program at 405-382-9205.

# Upward Bound Students Visit New York



Members of the SSC Upward Bound Program enjoy the New York City skyline at Top of the Rock, located at Rockefeller Plaza.

Students involved in Seminole State College's Upward Bound program recently returned from a trip to New York City. The 16 students who participated in the trip graduated from high school in May. Throughout the visit, students engaged in cultural and academic learning activities, alongside tours of many notable attractions in New York City. Students toured Columbia University, New York University, the Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum and Times Square. Upward Bound participants also took part in walking tours of the New York Financial District, the Brooklyn Bridge, Harlem, China Town, Little Italy and Central Park.

Students also viewed iconic New York structures at Top of the Rock, located 850 feet high at Rockefeller Plaza. Upward Bound students were able to view the Empire State Building, World Trade Center and other historic buildings.

A visit to the September 11th Me-

memorial and Museum was included, which was located on site of the original World Trade Center. The museum paid homage to the victims of the 1993 and 2001 attacks, with massive reflecting pools in place of where the original towers stood. Upward Bound participants attended a baseball game, the New York Yankees versus the Boston Red Sox, at Yankee Stadium. The students then visited the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

"All these activities served as a great cultural experience for our Upward Bound students, many of whom had rarely left the state of Oklahoma." Upward Bound Program Director Rich Thorton Said.

Upward Bound is a college preparatory program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of higher education.

# SSC Celebrates 90th Anniversary as Semester Begins



Seminole State College started its 90th year of serving students at the beginning of the fall semester. The College kicked off the celebration at its in-service training event on Aug. 11 for all full-time employees. Custodian Christine McKee (left) and President's Office Manager Kee-sha Mason (right) arrange cupcakes in the shape of the number 90 to celebrate the College's anniversary.



President Lana Reynolds greets employees at the SSC in-service training event on Aug. 11.

# Discussing the Past, Present and Future of SSC

Q & A with Three of the College's Presidents



**Dr. Jim Cook**  
SJC/SSC President  
1987-1996

## 1. What do you consider one of your biggest accomplishments of your presidency?

Encouraging and funding the development of computer-assisted instruction for the campus. Overall, I made out a list of 14 things that I wanted to accomplish when I became president and it took seven years to get them done.

## 2. Describe a challenge you faced during your presidency?

I had two huge problems to address, one was overcoming a zero balance in our financial reserves and getting nine of eleven campus buildings structurally sound again. The latter meant working with lawyers, architects, and structural engineers for an extended time.

## 3. What memories do you have of working with the community?

Oh, there are so many community activities with which I became involved. Of course, working with the Chamber of Commerce hand in glove was a great memory as was working as a Scout leader, little league baseball and soccer coach, helping to start the Seminole County Special Olympics Committee, and being the first co-chair of Leadership Seminole are examples of activities that I enjoyed.

## 4. How do you think Higher Education has changed since your years leading SJC/SSC?

Funding from the State has steadily decreased forcing many tuition increases.

## 5. What significant changes occurred to the physical campus during your years as president?

The structural renovation of nine campus buildings and, thanks to a State Bond Issue, the expansion of the Science wing to include a new lab for MLT students.

## 6. What was (is) your dream for Seminole State College?

To be recognized both in-state and nationally as one of the premier rural two-year colleges in America as judged by student success and efficient use of resources.

## 1. What do you consider one of your biggest accomplishments of your presidency?

We set record enrollments while simultaneously expanding opportunities for women, people of color and other under-represented groups. That two-decade focus set the stage for the Board to appoint the first female President of SSC.

## 2. Describe a challenge you faced during your presidency.

SSC faced dramatic declines in state funding for many years. To adequately fund vital programs, a state supported organization cannot continually do "more with less." Facing no end to cuts, SSC eventually had to make hard decisions to do "less with less." Those times created stress throughout the institution.

## 3. What memories do you have of working with the community?

SSC was a partner in every aspect of the community of Seminole. The College also positively impacted every community and school district in its five county service area. We expanded from three federal programs assisting communities to nine such programs

## 4. How do you think Higher Education has changed since your years leading SJC/SSC?

There has been the development of more of a focus on a business model of higher education. The unique need for and role of the community college has been neglected or forgotten.



**Dr. James Utterback**  
SSC President  
1997-2017

## 5. What significant changes occurred to the physical campus during your years as President?

In the two decades from 1997-2017, we were able to: create a modern residence hall system; more than double the physical size of the campus from 39 to 86 acres; remodel labs and classrooms; increase technology across campus including wireless access; modernize classroom space for nursing; create a ballroom for community functions; add administrative facilities and build a first-class softball complex.

## 6. What was (is) your dream for Seminole State College?

This College is a model of compassion and quality for rural community colleges to emulate. My dream is for it to continue this tradition of community college excellence.

Story continued on page 8 ►



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## Discussing the Past, Present and Future of SSC Cont.



**Lana Reynolds**  
**SSC President**  
2017-Present

**1. What do you consider one of your biggest accomplishments of your presidency?**

I hope my presidency reflects my love of this institution, its employees and its students. We exist to educate. While credit goes to many, many people - successfully completing our 10-year accreditation process by the Higher Learning Commission in the Spring of 2020 has to be the most important accomplishment of my tenure.

**2. Describe a challenge you faced during your presidency?**

Dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has been a constant challenge for the past 18 months. Concerns over student and employee safety and well-being, the temporary transition to all-virtual learning, limitations on campus activities and athletic competitions, a dramatic decrease in enrollment, and difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees were all negatively influenced by the pandemic.

**3. What memories do you have of working with the community?**

This community is, and always has been, my home. Working at the

college for over 30 years has expanded “my home” to surrounding towns and really the State. I have loved being part of the leadership teams of the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club and the Jasmine Moran Children’s Museum, as well as participating in organizations across Oklahoma working to improve the quality of life and educational opportunities for our citizens. It has been rewarding to work with people from diverse backgrounds and occupations who are all focused on doing something positive for others.

**4. How do you think Higher Education has changed since your years leading SJC/SSC?**

Out of necessity due to funding issues, Higher Education has become more of a business than a service organization. While we remain dedicated to helping students improve their lives through education, our ability to operate is dictated by the dollars we receive and raise. It is a constant battle to try to maintain quality on a limited budget.

**5. What significant changes occurred to the physical campus**

**during your years as president?**

Due to a decade of decreased state funding, we have had some major long-time deferred maintenance issues to address. The State Legislature has reinstated, and even increased, special funding through Section 13 funds to allow us to replace aging heat and air units, repair building interiors and resurface parking lots. Thanks to the SSC Educational Foundation, we will be opening the new Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex this year. This facility will enhance opportunities for our students, as well as have a huge economic impact on this region.

**6. What was (is) your dream for Seminole State College?**

I want to see Seminole State College’s enrollment grow – even surpassing the lofty goals of 20 years ago. I think enrollment growth is important to maintain the viability of our institution and to protect our desire for local governance. I also want to see more students have the opportunity to change their lives by walking on to this campus. Their stories are what fulfill our dreams.