



SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE
COLLEGIAN

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WELCOME BACK

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Submitting to The Collegian

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NEWS CONGRESSWOMAN BICE MEETS WITH STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS



U.S. Congresswoman Stephanie Bice visited Seminole State College on Aug. 22. She was greeted by three freshman President's Leadership Class students from Seminole. The students made Congresswoman Bice an honorary member of PLC and presented her with a welcome package, including the 2023 PLC "Together We Grow" t-shirt. Pictured (left to right): Chairty Hair, Amberlynn Mathews, Rep. Bice and Daylan Saxon.

SSC hosted a luncheon for U.S. Congresswoman Stephanie Bice with several local community leaders. Pictured: (seated, left to right) Seminole City Manager Steve Saxon, Assistant Chief of the Seminole Nation Brian Palmer, Director of the SSC Rural Business and Resources Center Danny Morgan, Brewster and Associates Consultant Karel Brewster and Seminole Chamber Executive Director Amy Britt; (standing, left to right) State Senator Grant Green (District 28), President of BancFirst Debbie Kuykendall, President of Security State Bank Mark Schell, Pam Robinson Real Estate Broker Associate Dillon Robinson, SSC President Lana Reynolds, Congresswoman Bice, Family Medicine Physician Dr. Jenna Geobagan, Superintendent of Seminole Schools Dr. Bob Gragg, State Representative Danny Williams (District 28), President of First United Bank Billy Norton and Seminole City Attorney and Assistant Adjutant General of the Oklahoma National Guard Brad Carter.



“KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON” AUTHOR TO SPEAK AT SSC

Seminole State College will host a special presentation by David Grann, the author of the nonfiction book “Killers of the Flower Moon,” on Sept. 21 at 10 a.m. inside the Jeff Johnston Auditorium on campus. While admission to the event is free, space is limited. Tickets must be reserved by visiting sscok.edu.

Grann’s presentation will focus on his research and writing about a series of murders that occurred in the Osage Nation during the 1920s. The Osage Nation became wealthy following the discovery of oil on their land, and many Osage individuals became some of the richest people in the world at the time. However, a conspiracy emerged as several members of the tribe were systematically murdered. Not only does Grann’s “Killers of the Flower Moon” focus on the conspiracy, but it also follows the

birth of the FBI, and the subsequent investigation into the murders helmed by J. Edgar Hoover. The book was a finalist for the National Book Award and spent 49 weeks on the New York Times Best-seller List, following its initial release in 2017.

A film adaption of “Killers of the Flower Moon” will see its theatrical release on October 20, 2023, with Martin Scorsese as director and starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert De Niro and Lily Gladstone.

The presentation is made possible by the SSC Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) federal grant program.

The event will open with a screening of the trailer for the upcoming film adaption. SSC President Lana Reynolds will welcome guests to the event, and

then the Director of NASNTI Kay Wallace will speak about the federal grant program and the value of bringing cultural events to the community. Grann will then give his presentation, followed by a question-and-answer session moderated by SSC Student Government Association President Benjamin Parker. To conclude, the author will be available to sign books for attendees.

If the capacity of the Jeff Johnston Auditorium is reached, overflow seating will be available with access to a livestream of the event. Following the program, all attendees still have the opportunity to meet the author and have a copy of their book signed.

For more information or questions, contact SSC NASNTI Director Kay Wallace at 405-382-9646 or k.wallace@sscok.edu.



Author David Grann will give a presentation on the research and writing of his 2017 non-fiction novel “Killers of the Flower Moon” on Sept. 21 at Seminole State College.

RESERVE YOUR FREE TICKETS

Scan the QR code with your cellular device.



LIFE MOVE-IN DAY



SSC welcomed campus residents, their family and friends on Move-In Day on Aug. 11. Students gathered their belongings and settled into their dorm rooms in the Roesler and Seminole Nation Residential Learning Centers. Classes begin Monday, Aug. 14.

Olivia Sander (right) lends a hand as incoming freshman Jaylee Friend (left) of Prague moves into her dorm.



LIFE SSC KICKS OFF ACADEMIC YEAR WITH WELCOME WEEK



As students arrived for their first day of class on Aug. 14, Seminole State College faculty and staff greeted them, helped them find their classrooms and passed out goody bags. Pictured: Assistant Professor of Agriculture Wendy Rich (center) welcomes two students in Tanner Hall.



Welcome Week continued with ice cream provided by the Scoops Ice Cream Truck on Aug. 16.



SSC Campus and Activities annual Welcome Week programming included free cotton candy for students to begin the week. Other Welcome Week activities included cupcake decorating, pen engraving, a free movie night at Strother Cinema, a pop-up gameshow and free fair-style food to conclude the event.



SSC President Lana Reynolds speaks with over 170 students at an athletic orientation held in the Raymond Harbor Field House on Aug. 15. The College's sports teams heard from coaches, administrators and staff about goals for the upcoming year, as well as campus resources.



Olivia Stevenson (right), of Shawnee, fastens a helmet for Daphne Lamoureux (left), of Seminole, before taking on the ropes course.

LIFE PLC PARTICIPATE IN TEAMBUILDING EXERCISES ON ROPES COURSE



The Seminole State College President's Leadership Class visited Oklahoma State University Challenge Course on Aug. 31. Students worked together to cross the ropes course high above the ground. OSU's Department of Wellness oversees the Challenge Course.



PLC freshmen Ramzie Lynch, Shawnee, and Nicole Blue, Shawnee, pause to pose for the camera before braving another section of the OSU Challenge Course.

JAMES MADISON'S INFLUENCE TO BE EXPLORED AT CONSTITUTION DAY EVENT

Seminole State College will host its annual Constitution Day event on Sept. 15 at 10 a.m. in the lecture hall located just inside the Enoch Kelly Haney Center. This year's event will feature a presentation by Professor of Government Jeffrey Christiansen titled "James Madison: Father of the Constitution." The event is free and open to the public.

"Long before he was the country's fourth president, James Madison was an instrumental figure during and after the Philadelphia Convention, where the

Constitution was drafted in the Summer of 1787," Christiansen said. "In addition to drafting the Virginia Plan, which served as the blueprint for the Constitution, Madison was a principal author of the Federalist Papers arguing for national ratification of the Constitution. He also wrote and introduced into Congress the first ten amendment proposals that became the Bill of Rights. While Madison was one of many important figures in early American political history, he was inarguably the most significant contrib-

utor to the making of the United States Constitution."

Constitution Day commemorates the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787, and the day honors those who have become U.S. citizens. Publicly funded educational institutions celebrate the day by providing educational programming about the history of the founding document.

For more information about the event, contact Christiansen at j.christiansen@sscok.edu.



SSC Professor of Government Jeffrey Christiansen will deliver a presentation on James Madison at the College's annual Constitution Day celebration on Sept. 15.

OSAGE HISTORY BROUGHT TO STAGE AT SSC

The Seminole State College Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions federal grant program hosted the Osage ballet "Wahzhazhe" on Aug. 15 in the Jeff Johnston Fine Arts Auditorium.

"Wahzhazhe" offers an immersive journey spanning 400 years of Osage history. The ballet depicts a culture that once thrived untouched by external forces and the impact of European settlers – a period marked by change, disease, affluence, modernization, loss and the eventual fusion into modern American culture.

"We were so excited to host this event on our campus. This performance not only showcases the beauty of contemporary ballet but also offers a window into the rich tapestry of Osage history. We are

certain this event was a meaningful educational experience for our community," Kay Wallace, SSC NASNTI Director, said.

SSC's NASNTI grant program is 100% federally funded in the amount of \$450,000 annually. In addition to hosting cultural experiences on campus, the grant also provides support for students with disabilities by training faculty and staff in best practices, implementing assistive devices and technology and redesigning foundational courses to ensure they best support online students with disabilities. NASNTI was also awarded a supplemental grant to aid in the initiative of Native language preservation and revitalization.



NASNTI hosted the Osage Ballet "Wahzhazhe" on Aug. 15 in the Jeff Johnston Fine Arts Auditorium.

FORMER TROJAN SOFTBALL PLAYER TAKES THE HELM AS SSC ATHLETIC DIRECTOR



Leslie Sewell began her new role as Seminole State College's Athletic Director in July. She is currently the only woman to serve in that role across all two-year colleges in Oklahoma.

At a glance, Leslie Sewell's journey from softball player to Athletic Director at Seminole State College might seem like a series of coincidences, a simple trajectory of luck—both good and bad.

But that couldn't be further from the truth.

Sewell's passion for softball and dedication to self-improvement led her to strong performances as a catcher and third base player at Shawnee High School. Although neither of her parents were athletes themselves, they embraced Sewell's love for the sport. Her mother, in particular, played a pivotal role, driving her all over the country for tournaments when travel ball was just beginning to gain popularity in the late-1990s. Her talent caught the attention of SSC's softball Head Coach at the time, Mark Dicus, and, after graduating from Shawnee High School in 2000, she became a Trojan.

Sewell jokingly refers to Dicus as the "Bobby Knight of softball," drawing a parallel to the legendary Indiana University and Texas Tech basketball coach known for his intensity.

"He pushed us every day to be our best. Although his coaching style was stern, I think it gave me the ability to put in the work to grow personally and professionally," Sewell said.

She continued catching and playing third base for the College. The team advanced to the national tournament, both her freshman and sophomore years. During that time, she sustained a shoulder injury, which relegated her to the role of designated hitter.

"I knew that I wasn't good enough at that point to go on to a four-year with my injury," Sewell said. "But I still needed to be a part of it. I felt coaching was the best avenue."

After her playing time at SSC con-

cluded, she went straight on to the role of Assistant Coach. She stayed in the position for two years while completing her bachelor's degree at East Central University in social work.

Throughout the summers, she would work for SSC's Upward Bound program as a Resident Assistant. The program provides students from first-generation, low-income and underprivileged backgrounds with educational opportunities to help them graduate from high school and excel in college. It was during her first summer working there that she met her husband of 17 years, Waylon, who was the Activities Advisor for the Upward Bound at the time.

She received a grant at ECU that required her to work for the state following the completion of her degree. She knew she'd have to leave behind a sport that had been an integral part of her life. Once she graduated, she worked for the

Department of Human Services in Oklahoma County as an Intake Specialist.

For five years, Leslie worked tirelessly in the child welfare system, navigating the complexities of the job with empathy and understanding. In 2008, her daughter Blakely was born. Parenthood brought about a profound shift in perspective, and she began to reassess her career path.

"For two and a half years, I worked at DHS as a non-parent. Then for two and a half years as a parent," Sewell said. The emotional toll of the work weighed on her, and she began to consider other job opportunities.

In 2010, she discovered an opening at SSC for an Upward Bound Coordinator. She started just as the grant program was hosting its summer camp.

"I felt like I was in Twilight Zone," Sewell laughed. "My 14-year-old daughter—she was 18 months at the time—I'm having to spend time away from her and my husband because we relocated to Oklahoma City, and I'm moving back to the college to live in the dorms again. I was like, 'Oh, wow, this again.'"

But it was also a moment of growth and opportunity for Leslie and her husband. The career change allowed them to embrace a new chapter in their lives and move away from big city life to create a home in Shawnee, drawing them closer to their roots, their families and the communities they cherished.

In 2014, the Sewells had their second daughter, Briar. Sewell continued to work for the grant program until she was offered the role of Athletic Services Coordinator in 2016 at the College.

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REGENTS APPROVE BIDS FOR RENOVATION PROJECT

FORMER TROJAN CONT.

Her background in coaching and social services provided her with a unique perspective in handling various responsibilities, including navigating sensitive issues like Title IX compliance and helping to ensure the smooth operation of the athletic department.

SSC President Lana Reynolds said her impact on the college didn't go unnoticed.

"Leslie's relentless work ethic, empathy and commitment to the success of our student athletes in the classroom and on the field is remarkable," Reynolds said.

Sewell was named Assistant Athletic Director in 2019. In the spring of 2023, Athletic Director Mike St. John announced his plans to retire at the end of June.

"My husband and friends would ask if I wanted to apply for the job, and I was unsure at first. Mike has worked in college athletics for decades. They're big shoes to fill," Sewell said.

Despite her hesitation, one thought kept resurfacing.

"My final decision was based on my girls. They'll be able to see that I did this. That I did this at a time where it's rare for a woman to hold this title—it shouldn't be rare, but it is."

In fact, when Sewell began as Athletic Director on July 1, she was the only female athletic director in all the two-year colleges in Oklahoma. Of the 25 teams in the NJCAA's Region II, which includes two-year colleges in both Arkansas and

Oklahoma, Sewell is one of two female athletic directors.

Her tenure as Athletic Director begins on the heels of a banner year for SSC Athletics. Four teams competed in NJCAA national tournaments—women's soccer, men's basketball, men's golf and softball.

"The more successful your teams are, the more pressure you have. Our goal is to maintain the success of those teams and to help teams that may have struggled in recent years push towards success," Sewell said.

Her vision for the athletic department goes beyond wins and losses. She is focused on instilling a sense of community involvement and academic excellence in student-athletes.

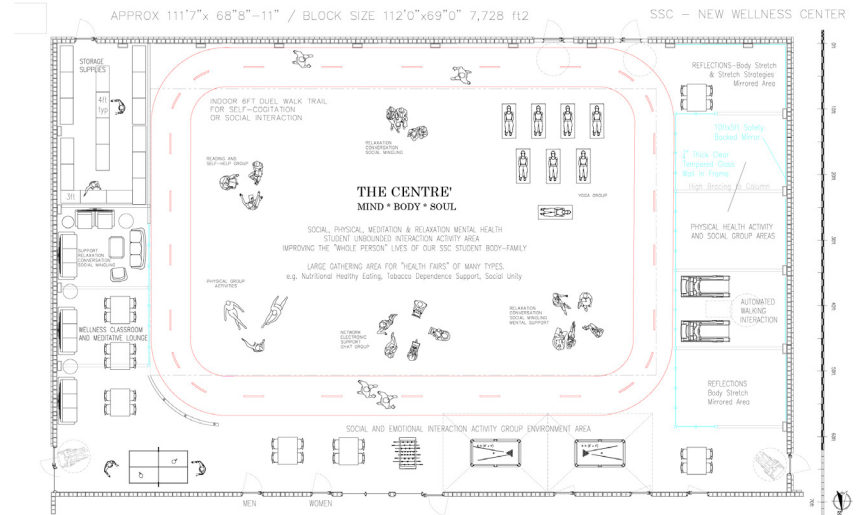
"This expectation of being role models and active participants in the community is deeply ingrained in the college's culture," she said.

Sewell believes that their actions should reflect not just their talent on the field but also their character off it.

With less than a month until fall sports begin, Sewell has hit the ground running. As she reviews Letters of Intent from student-athletes looking to play at SSC, she can't help but think of her own path—from to athlete to coach, from social worker to grant coordinator, ultimately arriving at Athletic Director.

The experiences she had along the way once seemed disconnected, but each twist and turn brought her back to SSC.

"This is where I belong," Sewell said.



An early concept render of SSC's natatorium renovation shows plans to create a wellness center in the space that previously housed the campus swimming pool.

The Seminole State College Board of Regents reviewed bids for the institution's natatorium renovation project and made updates to the employee policy manual regarding compensation at their meeting on Aug. 23. With the first item on the agenda, the Board approved a bid for the natatorium renovation project. The space, which formerly housed the campus swimming pool, will be repurposed into a wellness center.

"We believe this Wellness Center will be an invaluable asset for our campus community, a place that will complement the health and wellbeing of our students and employees," President Reynolds said.

The Board approved bids from two different companies. The Board approved a bid from Scott & Reid General Contractors for \$541,592. Scott & Reid's bid includes the main component of

construction as well as HVAC and electrical work. The Board then approved a bid from Lighthouse Electric & Integrated Systems in the amount of \$92,493 for a fire alarm system, electric work and key components needed to complete the project. Much of the expense of the project will be covered by federal relief funds the College received amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Next, the Board approved updates to the employee policy manual with changes to five separate items regarding employee pay—compensation, pay ranges, salary scale adjustments, longevity considerations and overload pay. The changes primarily centered on removing outdated pay ranges and provided greater clarification on how compensation is determined based on responsibilities, longevity and overload circumstances.