

SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE **COLLEGIAN**

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Submitting to The Collegian

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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.

Leadership Students Go Behind the Scenes at Oklahoma Aquarium



Seminole State College President's Leadership Class students visit the Oklahoma Aquarium in Jenks on Sept. 24. During the aquarium's "Un-filtered: Behind the Scenes Tour," students learned about animal care, aquarium operations and career opportunities before exploring the facility.



SSC President's Leadership Class students get a behind-the-scenes look at the Oklahoma Aquarium's bull shark exhibit. The tour gave students an up-close look at the processes and facilities used to care for the aquarium's animals.

SSC Employees Recognized at Statewide Conference



SSC employees were recognized at the 59th annual Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges Conference on Oct. 2 at Tulsa Community College. Pictured following the awards presentation, from left, are Erin Medley, Dr. Steve Bolin, Carmen Wright and SSC President Lana Reynolds.

Three Seminole State College employees were honored at the 59th annual Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges Conference on Oct. 2 at Tulsa Community College's Northeast Campus. During the event, History Professor and Student Success Coordinator Dr. Steve Bolin was named SSC Faculty Member of the Year; Human Resources Specialist Erin Medley was named Professional Staff Member of the Year; and Custodian Carmen Wright was named Support Staff Member of the Year.

Bolin has worked at SSC since August 2006. He teaches American History since 1877, Early Western Civilization to 1660, Modern Western Civilization since 1660 and Learning Strategies. As Student Success Coordinator, he chairs the Student Success Committee, which works to improve student retention and graduation. He also manages SSC's Learning Strategies courses and curriculum and over-

sees the College's Core Alert system.

Bolin earned his doctorate in history from Oklahoma State University. He and his wife, Shelly, have been married for 37 years and have two daughters, Isabelle and Abigail, two sons-in-law, Samuel and David, and two grandchildren, Noah and Evelyn. Bolin resides in Oklahoma City and is a member of Berean Bible Church in Del City. Outside of work, he enjoys carpentry, reading, research and spending time with his family.

Medley has served as SSC's Human Resources Specialist for three and a half years. In her generalist role, she assists with the full lifecycle of College employees, including recruitment, interviewing, onboarding, benefits, training, compliance, retirement, employee relations, workers' compensation and unemployment.

Medley holds an Associate of Arts in Journalism and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. She is a member of the

College and University Professional Association for Human Resources and recently founded Purple Oak Consulting, LLC, an HR consulting business that provides human resources support to small businesses. She resides in Seminole and has two children, Camryn, a senior at Tecumseh High School, and Jaxson, a seventh grader at Tecumseh Middle School. In her free time, Medley enjoys attending concerts and supporting her children in their extracurricular activities.

Wright has been a member of the SSC staff for 11 years and is an integral part of the College's campus operations team. As a custodian, she helps maintain a clean and welcoming environment for students, faculty and staff. Her responsibilities range from cleaning restrooms and shampooing carpets to taking out trash and mopping floors.

Wright is also known for assisting students as they navigate campus,

often providing directions to departments such as Admissions and Financial Aid.

Wright attended both Seminole State College and East Central University. She and her husband, Reggie, have been married for 33 years and reside in Seminole. They have two children, Stefan and Simone, and two granddaughters, Arabella and Dru.

In addition to the honorees, three SSC employees presented during the statewide conference. Director of Community Relations Kim Pringle led a session focused on developing a strong professional network.

GEAR UP Coordinator Kate Sprague discussed strategies for connecting community colleges with rural schools early in a student's educational journey.

Director of Board Relations and Administrative Operations Mechell Downey led a roundtable discussion for executive assistants.

College Starts Early for More Than 100 North Rock Creek Students

Nearly one in every five students at North Rock Creek High School is also a Seminole State College student.

This fall, 106 of North Rock Creek High School's approximately 500 students are taking SSC courses through concurrent enrollment, the largest group from any single high school at the College. Those students represent nearly 47% of the school's 227 juniors and seniors.

The milestone is particularly notable for a young high school. North Rock Creek began offering high school courses in 2018 and moved students into its new high school building in 2019. Its first senior class graduated in 2022.

Behind the enrollment figure is a coordinated system that begins months before students enter an online college classroom. North Rock Creek High School Counselors Jennifer Barnett and Ashley Moody meet with students and families each spring to introduce concurrent enrollment and identify those who are interested.

"We start back in the spring with a night where parents and kids can come, and then we have a spot on their course request form at the bottom that says, 'Are you interested in concurrent for next year?'" Moody said.

From there, the counselors meet individually with interested students, review their eligibility, help them select courses and guide them through the enrollment process. They work closely with SSC Academic Advisor Cindy Nolen and maintain a detailed shared

spreadsheet to track students, courses and enrollment requirements.

"And then we start pulling those kids in one at a time," Barnett said.

The support continues after enrollment. Instead of requiring students to complete their online college coursework independently at home, North Rock Creek provides a dedicated classroom where concurrent students can work during the school day.

Certified teacher Tessa Russell manages the classroom, which serves students throughout the day. She helps them access SSC systems, set up two-factor authentication, locate student identification information, monitor email and understand the expectations of an online college course.

"She helps them get everything set up," Barnett said. "And then she checks their grades every week, too."

Students show Russell their current grades, and she alerts the counselors if a student begins falling behind. As participation has grown, North Rock Creek has assigned additional teachers with available class periods to supervise groups of concurrent students. When possible, students are placed with teachers whose subject areas align with their college courses.

The arrangement gives students the flexibility of online learning without removing the structure and support of the high school. It also allows students to remain on campus and participate in athletics, organizations and other activities instead of losing a significant portion of the school day traveling to and from a college campus.



North Rock Creek High School counselors Ashley Moody, left, and Jennifer Barnett stand at the front of the school's dedicated concurrent enrollment classroom as students work on online Seminole State College courses. Certified teacher Tessa Russell manages the classroom and monitors students' progress throughout the semester.

Most students qualify for concurrent enrollment through ACT or PreACT scores, while others may complete a placement test. North Rock Creek reinforces that preparation through schoolwide testing opportunities. Freshmen take the PreACT 8/9, sophomores take the PreACT, juniors take the PSAT and seniors receive another opportunity to complete the ACT at no cost.

"Our kids are qualifying," Moody said. "They have the ACT scores or the PreACT scores."

Concurrent enrollment is one part of North Rock Creek's broader Individual Career Academic Plan process. Commonly known as ICAP, the process helps Oklahoma students identify their interests and skills, establish

postsecondary and workforce goals and create a personalized roadmap for life after high school. An ICAP can incorporate assessment results, an intentional sequence of courses, concurrent enrollment and work-based learning experiences such as internships, mentorships and job shadowing.

Barnett and Moody meet with students individually or in small groups to discuss their plans and connect their coursework to possible careers. Russell also oversees the high school's internship program, matching students with opportunities related to their interests.

North Rock Creek students have completed internships in dental of-

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COLLEGE STARTS EARLY

fices, at SSM Health, in elementary classrooms, through the district's child care program and with Joe Cooper Ford. The placements have allowed students to explore dentistry, health care, education, child care and the automotive industry before committing to a college major or career path.

"Just whatever their interests are," Barnett said.

Barnett and Moody have worked at North Rock Creek since 2016, arriving as the district was preparing to expand beyond eighth grade. In the decade since, the high school has paired rapid growth with significant academic achievement.

Since graduating its first class, North Rock Creek has produced three Oklahoma Academic All-State honorees: William Noah McMullan in 2022, Kathrine Grant in 2024 and Liz Swindell in 2025. Grant and Swindell were also named National Merit finalists.

Asked what has driven the school's early academic success, Moody pointed to the entire North Rock Creek community.

"Our teachers, our students and our families," Moody said.

Beginning with the fall 2026 semester, eligible North Rock Creek concurrent students also benefit from SSC's automatic scholarship for students in its five-county service area. After students qualify for the state concurrent tuition waiver, the scholarship covers their remaining fees and text-

books for up to nine credit hours for juniors and 18 credit hours for seniors.

North Rock Creek is located in Pottawatomie County, one of the five counties covered by the initiative. The scholarship is funded through the Scott Empowerment Fund, an endowed fund established following the SSC Educational Foundation's \$17 million gift from MacKenzie Scott's Yield Giving.

Barnett and Moody said most of North Rock Creek's 100 SSC students had already enrolled before they learned that their fees and textbooks would be covered.

The figure, therefore, reflects a concurrent-enrollment system that was already operating at a significant scale before the new financial assistance became available.

North Rock Creek's growth is expected to continue. In February, district voters approved a \$32 million no-tax-increase bond issue to construct new elementary and secondary buildings. If funding permits, plans also include a high school expansion with innovative science laboratories, a black box theater, a living history classroom and additional physical education facilities.

For a high school that graduated its first senior class only four years ago, the bond represents another phase of growth already visible in a classroom where 100 students are working toward high school diplomas and college degrees at the same time.

OACC Executive Director Visits SSC



Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges Executive Director Dr. Cheryl Evans visited Seminole State College on Sept. 23 as part of her tour of community colleges across the state. Evans, former president of Northern Oklahoma College, met with SSC leadership and toured campus facilities and programs. Pictured from left are Evans, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Bill Knowles, Vice President for Finance, Grants and Enrollment Melanie Rinehart, and President Lana Reynolds



SSC Director of Nursing Ann Benson (right) demonstrates the College's Anatomage Table for OACC Executive Director Dr. Cheryl Evans during her visit to campus. The Anatomage Table is a life-size, interactive 3D anatomy visualization system that allows students to virtually examine and explore the human body in detailed layers.

Going Places and Giving Back Where It All Began

When Hailey Mack arrived at Varnum High School as a freshman, she had two goals: go to college and play basketball.

She accomplished both at Seminole State College. Along the way, she visited universities across the country, explored London and Paris and prepared to continue her education more than 700 miles from home at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado.

Now, through the same GEAR UP program that helped her explore those possibilities, Mack is encouraging younger students to consider where college could take them.

Her experience reflects the theme of this year's National GEAR UP Week, "Lighting the Way." Observed Sept. 21-25, the week recognizes how Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, or GEAR UP, helps students and families prepare for education beyond high school.

Mack attended Justice Public School through eighth grade before transferring to Varnum, where GEAR UP staff began talking with her and her classmates about careers, college and their plans for the future.

"I knew I wanted to go to college, but I didn't know what I wanted to do," Mack said. "I knew I always grew up wanting to play basketball in college, and I'm grateful I got to do that for the past two years."

Neither of Mack's parents attended college, but both encouraged her to pursue higher education. GEAR UP helped her explore her interests and the opportunities available to her.



Hailey Mack, a 2026 Seminole State College graduate, is pictured in her dorm room at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, where she is studying health science.

Career exploration activities pointed toward the health field, which she studies today. Campus visits gave her a closer look at college life. She especially remembers touring Oklahoma State University with fellow Varnum students. In the summer of 2024, she also took a GEAR UP trip through Boston, Rhode Island and New York that ended in Washington, D.C.

A 2024 Varnum High School graduate, Mack chose to begin college close to home.

A basketball scholarship to SSC allowed her to fulfill a childhood goal while staying close enough to support her younger brother during his final two years of high school, just as he had supported her.

College basketball brought new demands.

Learning to work through difficult practices strengthened habits she also applied in the classroom.

"You have to be disciplined," she said. "I feel like I have to be there every class. I don't like missing class at all because I don't want to be left

behind."

SSC also gave Mack opportunities to travel. In May 2025, she visited London and Paris through the College's study abroad program, an experience she described as "amazing" and wished could have lasted longer.

Mack graduated from SSC in the spring of 2026 and transferred to Fort Lewis College to study health science. She no longer plays collegiate basketball, but she credits her time at SSC with helping her adjust to the next stage of her education.

"I got to work my way up, and now that I'm at a bigger school, I feel like that helped out tremendously," Mack said.

In Colorado, she has become involved with Fort Lewis College's Outdoor Pursuits program, which offers hiking, camping, rafting and skiing opportunities.

Moving farther from home has also made conversations with her mother especially meaningful. They talk nearly every day, whether Mack needs advice, help managing stress or someone

to listen.

"She's obviously my best friend," Mack said. "She's been helping me with all my stress that I have or questions that I may need answered. Even if she doesn't know it, she still gives me the best answer she can."

That steady encouragement is something Mack can now offer students beginning to think about their own futures.

For the past two summers, she has worked at SSC's GEAR UP camps. This July, more than 140 incoming eighth- and ninth-grade students from the program's 12 partner schools participated in two camps featuring college tours, career exploration and hands-on educational activities.

Working with the campers helped Mack grow more comfortable meeting new people.

Some of her favorite moments happened on the basketball court, where the former SSC player found herself drawing the younger students' admiration.

"They would always just go crazy over me," Mack said. "Like I was their idol or something."

For those students, Mack offers a familiar example of what can come after high school: someone who attended a local school, participated in GEAR UP and went on to play college basketball, travel abroad and continue her education.

SSC's GEAR UP program is supported by a seven-year, \$6.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education and serves approximately 1,168 students.

GEAR UP Hosts Family Movie Night



Seminole State College GEAR UP students and their families attended a Family Movie Night on Sept. 24 at the Jeff Johnston Fine Arts Center as part of National GEAR UP Week. The free event featured a screening of Disney's "Inside Out 2," pizza, popcorn, a drawing for a 55-inch television and opportunities to connect with representatives from SSC Education Navigation Services, Community Action and Lighthouse Counseling Services.



TRICK OR TREAT TRAIL

North Pond | SSC Campus

SSC Demolishes Former Dormitory



Seminole State College began demolition of the former S. J. Sarkeys Dormitory on Sept. 2, removing a long-vacant campus building completed more than four decades ago. Built in 1983, the two-story, 44-bed residence hall once housed male and female students. One-time deferred-maintenance funding allowed the College to safely remove the structure after deterioration, mold and other safety concerns made it a liability.

TRIO Students Explore College, Career Opportunities

Seminole State College students explored educational and career opportunities during a recent college and career fair hosted by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation at the Grand Casino Event Center in Shawnee.

Several of SSC's federally funded TRIO programs partnered for the event, bringing together high school students served by Upward Bound and current SSC students participating in Student Support Services.

The trip was sponsored by Student Support Services, STEM Student Support Services, Upward Bound I and II, and Upward Bound Math and Science I and II. Following the fair, students had lunch at Santa Fe Cattle Co.

"Upward Bound and Student Support Services are sister programs in the TRIO family, and we wanted to do something together to benefit all our students," Student Support Services Advisor Megan Goff said.

Students spoke with representatives from colleges and universities throughout Oklahoma and neighboring states, including Texas, Kansas and Missouri. Technical schools and employers also attended the fair, giving students an opportunity to learn about career pathways and employment options available while pursuing a college degree.

For some students, the experience broadened their plans for the future.

"I had planned to only get my Medical Laboratory Technician degree, but now I am considering attending a four-year university to get a bachelor's degree after speaking with recruiters at the fair," STEM Student Support Services participant and Health Sciences major Amanda Gaddy of Shawnee said.

Student Support Services participant Rebecca Heikkinen said the fair gave her a chance to explore a variety of universities while reinforcing her



Seminole State College students participating in the College's TRIO programs attended a recent college and career fair hosted by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation at the Grand Casino Event Center in Shawnee. Students visited with colleges, technical schools and employers to explore future opportunities.

current plans.

"I was really excited to see all the options for universities available," Heikkinen of Paden said.

SSC's Student Support Services and STEM Student Support Services programs serve students who are first-generation college students, economically disadvantaged or individuals with disabilities.

The SSC Student Support Services Project is 100% federally funded in the amount of \$294,725 annually. The SSC STEM Student Support Services Project is 100% federally funded in the amount of \$261,888 annually.

For more information about SSC's TRIO programs, contact Director of TRIO Janna Wilson-Byrd at 405-382-9642 or visit sscoc.edu.

SSC Welcomes Retirees Back to Campus



Retired employees from Seminole State College gathered for a luncheon on Oct. 5. The theme of the event was the College's 95th anniversary. SSC President Lana Reynolds provided retirees with an update on campus activities and accomplishments from the past year, while Director of Communications Josh Hutton presented on the early history of the College.

Pictured seated (left to right) are: Dr. Richard Wood, Tom Stephens, Tracy Jacomo, Dr. Donna Hardin, Dr. Rebecca Kennedy, Gloria Wheeler, Jonna Bunyan and Fred Bunyan. Standing (left to right) are: Dr. Jim Cook, Rusty Beene, Larry Vickers, Dr. Noble Jobe, Mary Ann Hill, Dr. Jim Utterback, Annette Troglin Barnes, Dr. Linda Goeller, Janet Waddell, Brenda Hudson, Debbie Robertson, Susan Walker, Debbie Hammond, Malinda Browning, Julie Hix, Patricia Cokeley, Marie Dawson, Kelly Chastain, Susan Shumaker, Kelly Kirk, Perthena Latchaw, Ted Hurt, Cynthia Yerby and David Cobb.

At SSC, Two Tribal Princesses Share a Path in Leadership

Alivia Wapskineh was nearing the end of her reign as Miss Seminole Nation. Mia Reich had only recently been crowned Miss Choctaw Nation.

Sitting together at Seminole State College in mid-September, the two students were looking at opposite ends of an experience few classmates could share: representing their nations while managing coursework and campus commitments.

Wapskineh was preparing for the Sept. 17 Seminole Nation princess pageant that would select her successor. Reich was beginning her year of service after earning her title at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival.

Their earlier titles had overlapped,

too. Wapskineh was Junior Miss Seminole Nation while Reich served as Junior Miss Indian Oklahoma.

"We get to reign again," Wapskineh said.

This time, they also share a college campus. Both are President's Leadership Class scholarship recipients at SSC, where Wapskineh is a sophomore studying elementary education and Reich is a freshman studying biology and playing basketball for the Belles.

Wapskineh grew up in Tahlequah before moving to McCloud, where she graduated from high school. Attending SSC allowed her to stay close to Seminole Nation activities while pur-

suing opportunities through the leadership program.

Reich, a Wright City High School graduate, wanted to begin at a smaller college before transferring to a university. A campus visit and conversations with the basketball coaches helped her choose SSC.

"Everyone was super welcoming on campus when I did my tour and I knew that this was the best for me," Reich said.

Both arrived with experience representing their communities and families who had helped them get there.

An older sister encouraged Wapskineh to enter her first pageant, Junior Miss Seminole Nation. Her first Sem-

inole dress was also a sister's work.

Her sisters continue to make many of the dresses she wears, spending hours sewing fabric, rickrack and intricate patchwork. For Wapskineh, wearing those garments is a way to represent the siblings who helped raise and encourage her.

"I hope I'm making my little siblings and my big siblings proud doing this," she said.

She thinks often about the opportunities she has received that her older sisters did not, and about the role they played in making those opportunities possible.

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TRIBAL PRINCESSES

“I have a whole village behind me that supports me through it all,” Wap-skinah said.

Reich’s mother and grandmother have worked alongside her in service to their nation, too. Together, the three helped create something now recited at official Choctaw Nation gatherings.

Reich was 15 when she helped write the nation’s flag pledge with her mother, Melissa, and her grandmother, Lillie Ott. The language preservation project earned her the Girl Scout Gold Award.

The Choctaw Tribal Council unanimously approved the official flag salute on Oct. 14, 2023. It honors the nation’s faith, family and culture and follows the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance at official meetings.

Reich remembers wondering whether the proposal would even reach the chief’s desk. Seeing it adopted changed what she believed a teenager from a small town could accomplish.

It also gave her an experience to draw upon when encouraging younger children.

“You can do hard things, you can do big things,” Reich said.

Her own progress through tribal pageants required persistence. She began competing at age 8 and twice finished as first runner-up in her district’s Little Miss competition. On her third attempt, she won the district title and went on to become the 2018-19 Little Miss Choctaw Nation.

She later served as the 2024 Junior Miss Indian Oklahoma, representing Native communities across the state.

Those experiences helped her understand the responsibilities of being a goodwill ambassador.

“It’s not just you stand on stage and you wave,” Reich said. “You’re actually talking and representing the tribe in a professional manner.”

At SSC, both students are extending that experience through the President’s Leadership Class.

For Reich, the program has introduced her to classmates whose ambitions encourage her own.

“Seeing other students that come from places all over the state that want to make a difference and that want to go places, it’s really encouraging,” she said.

Wapskinah’s college leadership opportunities have taken her into conversations with leaders across Oklahoma. In February, she represented SSC at the George and Donna Nigh Leadership Academy in Oklahoma City. The four-day program included community service, meetings with state leaders and a visit to the Oklahoma Capitol, where students met with the Women’s Legislative Caucus.

In those settings, Wapskinah said, she thinks about the family and tribal community she represents.

“I’m hoping I get to use what they taught me and to carry that on through big spaces,” she said.

Balancing those opportunities with her first year of college also taught her something about herself.

“I’ve learned I can take on a lot more than I ever thought I could,” Wapskinah said.

Their friendship gives them someone who understands the pressure that comes with representing a nation.

“We’re always expected to be sun-



Miss Choctaw Nation Mia Reich (left) and Miss Seminole Nation Alivia Wapskinah stand in front of the south pond on Seminole State College’s campus. Both are President’s Leadership Class scholarship recipients who balance campus involvement with service to their tribal communities.

shine and rainbows,” Wapskinah said.

With the fellow princesses they call their “sash sisters,” she said, they can talk candidly about difficult days and take a breather.

That support runs both ways. Both students described learning from the younger titleholders serving alongside them. Reich’s group includes an energetic 8-year-old Little Miss and a Junior Miss whose positive outlook encourages her.

“I’m learning just as much from them as I hope that they’re learning from me,” Reich said.

Wapskinah has watched younger princesses grow more confident speaking publicly and representing their communities. Supporting young people is also what draws her to elementary education.

“I want you to know where you come from so you can go further into this world and pursue your dreams

and not just think that you have to stay where you are,” she said.

Wapskinah has another goal ahead of her: competing for Miss Indian Oklahoma, which is set to take place on Nov. 14.

Their next steps could bring them to the same campus again. Reich plans to transfer to the University of Central Oklahoma to study forensic molecular biology. UCO is also among the universities Wapskinah is considering. Both hope to continue participating in college leadership programs.

Wapskinah has seen former tribal princesses remain close long after their reigns, helping one another through the next stages of their lives. She hopes she and Reich will do the same.

“It’d be awesome to stay friends throughout our whole life,” she said.

SSC, OU Polytechnic Institute Sign Transfer Agreement

Seminole State College and the University of Oklahoma Polytechnic Institute have established a new articulation agreement designed to provide SSC computer science students with a seamless pathway to a bachelor's degree in cybersecurity.

Representatives from the two institutions signed the agreement Sept. 28. Under the partnership, students completing SSC's Associate in Science in Computer Science with a Cybersecurity Emphasis can transfer their SSC coursework into the Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity program at the OU Polytechnic Institute.

The transfer map outlines a 123-credit-hour path to the bachelor's degree, consisting of 63 credit hours at SSC followed by 60 credit hours through the OU Polytechnic Institute. The bachelor's completion portion of the cybersecurity program is currently offered at the OU-Tulsa campus.

"This agreement gives our students a clear destination from the moment they begin the program at SSC," SSC STEM Division Chair Wendy Rich said. "They can build a strong foundation in computer science and cybersecurity here while knowing the work they complete will continue to move them toward a bachelor's degree."

SSC's cybersecurity emphasis provides students with a foundation in computer science while introducing coursework in areas such as information security, programming, scripting and discrete mathematics. The articulation agreement provides a semester-by-semester plan showing how those courses transfer into OU's cyber-



Representatives from Seminole State College and the University of Oklahoma Polytechnic Institute gathered Sept. 28 for the signing of a new articulation agreement creating a transfer pathway from SSC's Computer Science program to OUPI's bachelor's degree program in cybersecurity.

security curriculum.

The OU Polytechnic Institute, part of OU's Gallogly College of Engineering, emphasizes hands-on, industry-focused education in technology and engineering-related fields. Its cybersecurity program combines applied coursework with real-world projects and opportunities for industry engagement. OU describes the cybersecurity degree as a 60-credit-hour bachelor's completion program designed to be completed after a student's foundational college coursework.

OU Polytechnic Institute Director Teri K. Reed said the partnership reflects the institute's focus on creating accessible routes into high-demand technology fields.

"We are especially proud the Polytechnic Institute is part of the University of Oklahoma's first articulation agreement with Seminole State College," Reed said. "This partnership

represents exactly what OUPI was created to do: build flexible pathways that allow students to continue their education in high-demand fields while preparing for the technology careers that are important to Oklahoma's future."

SSC Dean of Instruction Jessica Isaacs said the agreement helps remove one of the common uncertainties students face when transferring between institutions.

"Students should not have to wonder whether the courses they have already completed will move them closer to their next degree," Isaacs said. "By working with OU to align these programs in advance, we can give students a clear academic plan, allow them to begin their education close to home and help them transfer without losing momentum or credit along the way."

For Dr. John Hassell, associate professor of Software Development and

Integration at the OU Polytechnic Institute, the partnership also has a personal connection. Hassell grew up in Wewoka and attended Seminole State before continuing his education at OU.

"I grew up in Wewoka, just down the road from Seminole, and like many people in this region, I looked to Seminole State College as a beacon of opportunity, a place where higher education was within reach for anyone, at any stage of life," Hassell said. "Seminole State provided the strong academic foundation that prepared me for success at the University of Oklahoma."

Hassell said the agreement can help today's students follow a similar path.

The articulation agreement is also now listed by both institutions as the transfer pathway from SSC's Computer Science Cybersecurity Emphasis to the OU Polytechnic Institute's Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity.