

# SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE COLLEGIAN

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## NIGHT AT THE LIGHTS

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### **NURSING APPEAL APPROVED**

Nursing admits students for spring following Okla. Board of Nursing approval. [Page 5](#)

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### **SSC EMPLOYEE'S SHORT FILM SCREENS AT FESTIVAL**

Matt Kappale presents his debut short film at the L.A. Skins Fest film festival. [Page 6](#)

# Submitting to The Collegian

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



NEVER MISS A GAME OF **SSC SPORTS**

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

## AREA SCHOOLS ATTEND HIGH SCHOOL VISIT DAY



*Seminole State College welcomed students to campus for its annual High School Visit Day on Nov. 12. Nearly 200 students attended the event from Bethel, Bowlegs, Carl Albert, Davenport, Epic Charter Schools, Eufaula, Graham-Dustin, Holdenville, Jim Thorpe Academy, Macomb, McLoud, New Lima, North Rock Creek, Okemah, Paden, Prague, Sasakwa, Seminole, Shawnee, Strother, Stroud, Tecumseh and Wewoka. Students enjoyed interactive breakout sessions, a campus tour scavenger hunt and a complimentary lunch.*



*SSC Assistant Professor of Agriculture Wendy Rich and Director of Community Relations Kim Pringle lead students in a breakout session entitled "Beyond the Books: Getting Involved on Campus."*

## SSC SOCCER COMPETES IN NATIONAL TOURNAMENT FOR SIXTH YEAR IN A ROW



*The Seminole State College women's soccer team recently competed in the NJCAA Division I Soccer National Tournament in Wichita, Kansas. The Trojans secured a decisive 3-0 victory against Cowley County on Nov. 19 but were unable to advance out of pool play following a first-round loss to Daytona State College on Nov. 17. The team concluded the season with a record of 19-1-2. This year marked the sixth consecutive national tournament appearance for the Head Coach Dan Hill and the women's soccer team.*

## MILITARY AND VETERAN RESOURCE FAIR DRAWS CROWD



*Seminole State College hosted its second annual Military and Veteran Resource Fair on Nov. 7 at the Enoch Kelly Haney Center on campus. The event drew nearly 80 veterans and active service members seeking essential support.*



*Veteran owned-and-operated food truck Sam's Cheesin' It Up was on-site to serve food to attendees and vendors at the resource fair.*



*Pictured (left to right): American Legion Post 204 Vice Commander Robert Gatzke, SSC VA School Certifying Officer Stacey Foster, Post 204 Commander Carl Odom and Post 204 member Harris Thacker pose for a photo at the event. The American Legion donated 5,000 American flags that were planted across campus in recognition of the event and the Veteran's Day holiday.*



## SSC LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT WITH HOLIDAY FUN

*Seminole State College hosted its annual Night at the Lights event on Dec. 2 at the Reynolds Wellness Center in Seminole. Local families enjoyed the community Snowman Wonderland light display, as well as cookies and hot chocolate provided by the College. Dozens of SSC student-athletes served food, beverages and manned crafting stations, helping children create festive artwork.*



# OKLAHOMA BOARD OF NURSING APPROVES SSC'S APPEAL



*Seminole State College nursing faculty and staff celebrate the Oklahoma Board of Nursing's decision to allow the institution to admit new students. Pictured (left to right): Assistant Professor Ann Benson, Assistant Professor Brenda Hudson, Assistant Nursing Program Director Damaila Lester, Office Manager Julie Mathews, Health Sciences Division Chair Dr. Misty Gray, Assistant Professor Miranda Stewart, Assistant Professor Jessica Shelburne, Assistant Professor Christine Clay, Academic Advisor Carmen Hutchins.*

Seminole State College has announced the reinstatement of admissions to its nursing program following the Oklahoma Board of Nursing's approval of an appeal on Nov. 14. The decision comes after the program was placed on conditional status in November 2023 due to three consecutive years of low student pass rates on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) in 2020, 2021 and 2022. This restriction prohibited the college from admitting

new students but did not impact those already enrolled.

The college's successful appeal reflects a year-long effort to address the program's challenges, including significant curriculum updates, the construction of a new state-of-the-art simulation lab and enhanced benchmarking for students. The program had a successful site visit by the Oklahoma Board of Nursing (OBN) in September of 2024, which confirmed the program's improvements.

SSC's cumulative NCLEX pass rate for 2024 has risen to 88 percent, compared to the state average of 87 percent..

In a memo sent to campus, SSC President Lana Reynolds commended the commitment and perseverance shown by the nursing faculty and staff. "I am thankful for the dedicated, persistent and graceful manner in which Health Sciences Division Chair Dr. Misty Gray, Assistant Nursing Program Director Damaila Lester and the nursing faculty

and staff have navigated through this difficult situation," Reynolds said. "This is not only exciting news for our campus – but also for our community and the state."

With OBN's approval, SSC will welcome a new cohort of nursing students beginning in January 2025.

For more information about the SSC nursing program, visit [sscok.edu](http://sscok.edu) or contact Nursing Academic Advisor Carmen Hutchins at [c.hutchins@sscok.edu](mailto:c.hutchins@sscok.edu).

# FROM EXTRA IN A GATORADE COMMERCIAL TO LOCAL FILMMAKER

Seminole High School and Seminole State College alumnus Matt Kappele achieved a major milestone in his filmmaking journey on Nov. 24, when his debut short film, “Cheatin’ Ain’t Easy,” was screened at the L.A. Skins Fest Native American Film Festival.

Kappele, a member of the Choctaw Nation, serves as the Upward Bound Math and Science II Coordinator at Seminole State College. He, alongside two others, created the film during the summer of 2023. He took on the roles of director, cinematographer, lighting technician and editor.

“I wanted to get something made just to say I had actually done it,” Kappele said. “It was an opportunity to learn the basics of making my own project and develop my skills.”

The film features former Seminole State College Upward Bound participants Jael Salceda and Mvhvya Gravatt. Salceda took on the lead role as a student searching for a study guide moments before a test when a supernatural force intervenes, enticing her to cheat. Gravatt handled sound. Salceda is currently finishing up her associate degree at SSC and Gravatt graduated from SSC last May and is currently enrolled in the Film and Media Studies program at the University of Oklahoma.

Kappele credits SSC and its Upward Bound students for providing inspiration and support.

“Working here with such passionate young people has been a huge motivator. They’re always willing to help out and bring so much energy to the process,” he said.

Both Salceda and Gravatt joined Kappele for the screening of their film in Los Angeles.

“L.A. Skins Fest was a really eye-opening experience about the filmmaking opportunities that are out there. I got to meet some great filmmakers and network with folks from Hulu and Netflix,” Kappele said.

“Cheatin’ Ain’t Easy” was previously accepted into the Fort Smith International Film Festival in Arkansas and the Native Lens Film Festival in Pueblo, Colorado.

Kappele’s love for storytelling began early. “I’ve been interested in films ever since I was a little kid,” he said. “The first memory I have of seeing something and being like, ‘Oh my gosh, this is insane,’ was when I saw Jurassic Park in theaters. My grandma also bought me a VHS copy of King Kong vs. Godzilla, and I thought it was the greatest thing ever. Those two films were big reasons why I fell in love with movies.”

After graduating from Seminole High School in 2007, Kappele attended Seminole State College before transferring to the University of Oklahoma, where he earned a degree in communication. His foray into film began humbly—as an extra in a Gatorade commercial starring Kevin Durant.

“You can’t really see me,” Kappele laughed. “I’m way in the background during a warm-up at a Thunder game, but if you zoom in close, you can tell it’s me.”

Kappele soon landed other opportunities, appearing in local commercials and a crime reenactment series on the



*Seminole State College Upward Bound Coordinator Matt Kappele recently screened his short film “Cheatin’ Ain’t Easy” at the L.A. Skins Fest Native American Film Festival.*

REELZ Channel.

From 2012 to 2016, he worked with the Oklahoma City Thunder, where he started in game-day operations before becoming an associate for the OG&E Thunder Bolt, the team’s traveling marketing tool.

After leaving the Thunder, he joined The Sports Animal radio station as a producer. In addition to managing live broadcasts, he occasionally chimed in on-air during discussions about major sports events.

Outside of his role at SSC, Kappele is

already hard at work on his next short film and plans to continue blending humor with eerie twists. “I love comedies and scary movies because those were my favorites growing up,” he said.

His short film “Cheatin’ Ain’t Easy” is available to watch on YouTube.

Reflecting on his journey, he emphasized the joy of storytelling. “If success comes, great. But for now, I’m focused on creating something entertaining for my family, friends and anyone who enjoys a good story.”

# NASNTI PROGRAM SECURES SUPPLEMENTAL GRANT, PROVIDING FREE COUNSELING SERVICES TO STUDENTS

The Seminole State College Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) federal grant program was recently awarded a supplemental grant, totaling \$157,500. The funding will support an array of initiatives at the college, including mental health services, faculty training and enhancements to the Computer Science curriculum.

The grant includes \$60,000 designated for mental health initiatives, ensuring accessible counseling support for SSC students. Licensed Professional Counselor Stephanie Hassell, an SSC alumna, will provide free counseling sessions for students every Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Room 103 of the Boren Library. Hassell specializes in treating trauma, anxiety and depression. Counseling will be available both in-person and online, and SSC students will also gain access to customized mental health videos on topics like stress and anxiety management through the SSC mobile app.

The grant also includes allocations to train faculty and staff on supporting students with disabilities. SSC will expand professional development in three software tools: EquatIO, Kurzweil 3000 and ReadSpeaker.

To meet the demands of a rapidly evolving tech landscape, SSC will use grant funding to enhance its Computer Science curriculum. With the grant award, the NASNTI Computer Science Specialist and two faculty members will attend the EDUCAUSE Conference in Nashville in October 2025. This event will provide insights into cybersecurity, IT infrastructure and emerging tech.

Additionally, SSC will contract a programming expert to revise the CS 1113 Programming in Visual Basic course, which includes training on skills such as graphical user interface design, event-driven programming and dynamic arrays. The program's software resources will also grow with the acquisition of

H5P Smart Import, a tool for creating interactive online course content, which will be integrated into SSC's Brightspace Learning Management System.

The NASNTI program will also expand its cultural programming with sponsored events featuring prominent indigenous speakers, including NASA astronaut Nichole Mann and Paralympian Dr. Cheri Blauwet.

The final portion of the supplemental grant includes an allocation for the upgrading of college's IT infrastructure, expanding network capacity and adding wireless equipment to better serve the campus community.

SSC President Lana Reynolds complimented staff in a memo sent to campus. "A big thank you to Kay Wallace, Director of NASNTI and Rich Thornton, Senior Director of Grants and Compliance, for all of their work in securing these funds for campus. Another big thank you to Psychology Professor



*Licensed Professional Counselor Stephanie Hassell will provide free mental health counseling to Seminole State College students through the supplemental grant.*

Christal Knowles for her help in getting the data and connections needed to facilitate the ask for support of the mental health initiative."

## ENROLL FOR **SPRING 2025**

Speak to your assigned advisor or visit the Enrollment Center to secure your spring classes today.

You can also enroll by emailing **advising@sscok.edu** or calling **405-382-9797**.

# SSC EMPLOYEES ATTEND WOMEN IN HIGHER ED CONFERENCE



*Twenty Seminole State College employees attended the Oklahoma Women in Higher Education Fall 2024 Conference at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond on Nov. 22. The full-day agenda included sessions on topics such as leadership development, work-life balance, empowerment, leveraging AI for success, mentorship and prioritizing self-care. Pictured left to right are: Amanda Thomas, Amanda Glasgow, Rachelle Jones, Yahnah Factor, Michelle Pruitt, Anna Skender, Mechell Downey, Melanie Rinehart, Edith Cathey, Tina Savage, Alesha Hill, Dr. Nilmini Senaratne, Angela Hardo, Tina Morris, Damaris Haney, Kay Wallace, Jessica Isaacs, Alecia Bailey and Calvinis Prentice.*



*Presidents Ruth Jackson, Langston University; Lana Reynolds, SSC; and Diana Lovell, Southwestern Oklahoma State University participated in a Presidents' Panel discussion to open the conference. The session was moderated by OKWHE State Chair Elect Dr. Melissa Brevetti.*

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