



We're Focused on Your Future!

Otero College
President's Report
September 2024
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Transform the Student Experience

Otero held the second-annual HSI Festival at the La Junta High School stadium on Friday, September 13. This event immersed attendees in an evening of cultural richness as the community came together to celebrate Hispanic heritage. Participants had the option to watch Otero men's and women's soccer matches while enjoying food from local food trucks, testing and voting on the best salsa, and watching games for children at half-time between each game.

Competitors of the salsa contest had an entry fee of \$5 and submitted a quart of salsa. The winners of the contest received a custom wreath, and the people's choice winner received an Otero College gift basket. Proceeds from the contest entries benefited scholarships for Otero College students.



Our Student Life is vibrant and active. On September 24th, they hosted a Drive-In movie, "Hocus Pocus" on the side of the gym wall and on the 25th they played Ultimate Rock Paper Scissors. The events included staff and faculty, to provide opportunities to have more interactions beyond the classroom with students. Individuals were given two bead necklaces and wore them in visible locations. As they passed others wearing necklaces, they stopped to play them in rock paper scissors. The loser of the match gave the winner one of their bead necklaces. Whomever had the most bead necklaces by the end of the day won!

Our community is once again delighted to host students to the Arkansas Valley from across the globe. Over 65 students have enrolled to study, learn and become the best version of themselves at Otero College for the Fall 2024 semester. Representing 25 countries and participating across the campus from the nursing program to the golf course, the world truly has come to Otero!

International students at Otero College are enrolled in nursing, associate degree seeking and medical lab technician programs. They are teammates on the soccer, basketball, volleyball, baseball, and golf teams. International students live both on and off campus, but one thing is clear; they have an impact on our community while living and learning with us.

There are many ways that our international students interact with our community. One of them kicked off this week in the Learning Commons at Otero College; the monthly Lunch and Learn series. Students from Kenya presented information about their home country including history, geography, and everyone's favorite cultural topic; food! Throughout the school year, students from different countries will present at 12:15 in the Learning Commons on the first Wednesday of each month. Students from Spain are up next with their presentation planned for October 2. All community members are encouraged and welcome to attend.

A second annual tradition is the feast known as International Foods Night. Otero College invites everyone to come and celebrate our international students on November 14th at our 29th annual International Foods Night event. The yearly tradition of flags, fun, and festivities to showcase our international students is once again in the Rizzuto Banquet Room. Tables and tickets are on sale now. Tickets include multiple courses of internationally themed food – appetizers, entrees and desserts. Back by popular demand, Spanish beef empanadas and Japanese potstickers are on the menu for appetizers. The palate will be delighted by the main course highlighting dishes from Israel, Kenya and China. A new addition this year will be a multicultural dessert bar to delight everyone's tastebuds and curiosity. The on-campus team at Sodexo pulls out all the stops to make this a delicious and beautiful meal. Internationally themed and locally donated beer and wine are served for tips to support the programs and scholarships of the international program at Otero College.

Students will be entertaining the audience with their talents from their home countries. Otero students from Kenya, Germany and Brazil are already honing their talents. Jace Honey is confirmed as the event's auctioneer once again, doing his part to raise funds for scholarships and support for international students throughout the year. The planning committee is thrilled to announce the return of Mariachi Lobos; local mariachi band extraordinaire, to complete the evening with singing and dancing.



Create Education without Barriers through Transformational Partnerships

Otero College recently partnered with the CE Shop to provide students with an award-winning real estate education non-credit option.

This exciting new partnership will provide our students with exclusive access to a one-stop-shop education platform featuring Pre-Licensing, Exam Prep, Post-Licensing, and Continuing Education packages for all 50 states and D.C. Whether it's their industry-leading pass rates, 100% online courses, or their bountiful Agent Essential resource pages, this partnership is a valuable addition in helping the students at Otero gain an edge in the real estate industry. Partnering with The CE Shop not only offers students exciting new career paths, but it also attests to Otero's dedication to diversifying and supporting our curriculum.

The CE Shop believes that top-quality real estate education enables students to pursue a myriad of career opportunities, from practicing as a residential real estate agent to working as a real estate investor – and beyond.

Transform Our Own Workforce Experience

Otero has added a few new staff members to our team since last month.

Jenni Somers has been hired as the Assistant Controller and began on September 16th.

Traci Johnson, current math faculty member, was selected as the Math and Science Department Chair on September 9th.

Catalina Hernandez Morris is the new part-time Cosmetology Salon Aide and began her duties on September 6th.

Ryan Claret was just hired as the part-time Construction Site Assistant and started on September 23rd.

We have also hired several additional duty professional tutors. Brian Beyerl, Math Faculty Jhay Fletcher, Assistant Women's Basketball Coach, and Brandon Coates, Head Men's Wrestling Coach. These individuals will cover five nights of tutoring per week in the Learning Commons starting on September 23rd.

We are pleased to announce that as of Tuesday, September 3rd, Angela Moore and Dr. Chelsea Herasingh have been successfully selected as Vice President of Student Affairs and Vice President of Academic affairs, respectively.

Angela Moore has more than 13 years of experience in higher education and has a passion for serving students outside of the classroom. Angela started her career in 2011 at Otero after completing a BA in English Literature at Colorado State University, where she met her husband who is from the Arkansas Valley. Once she began working in TRiO Student Support Services, Angela quickly recognized her love for higher education and completed her MA degree in Higher Education Administration and Leadership from Adams State University.

Angela has held a diverse set of roles within student affairs ranging from academic and career advising, transfer coaching, and a lengthy stint as Director of Financial Aid. Angela briefly served as the Director of Student Financial Services at Colorado State University Pueblo from 2019-2021 before returning to Otero to serve in her current role as the Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing.

Angela is passionate about giving back to the community in a way that helps its citizens bloom into productive and self-sustaining members through access to higher education. She believes that student affairs aspires to value students, limit obstacles, build resiliency and foster a climate where students thrive in their own way. Angela lives in the country with her husband and three children. She loves to spend time outside, reading, cooking, and being with friends and family.

Dr. Chelsea Herasingh is a transformative leader in higher education, served as the Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs at Otero College. With a Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology and over a decade of progressive experience in higher education, Dr. Herasingh has led initiatives to create inclusive, innovative learning environments that ensure all students, especially those

from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, have access to exceptional academic and co-curricular experiences. She has a proven track record of driving strategic goals, fostering student success, growing faculty and staff, and inspiring excellence across the institution. Dr. Herasingh resides in La Junta, Colorado with her husband, two dogs, five hens, a rooster, and numerous outdoor cats who call La Junta home.

