



*We're Focused on Your Future!*

Otero College  
President's Report  
May 2024  
Kimberly Zant, Ed.D.

### **Transform the Student Experience**

On Saturday, May 4, Otero held its 82nd graduation ceremony. In addition to the state of Colorado, graduates represented 13 states and 14 different countries. Later that day we awarded three certificates at the Phlebotomy Pinning ceremony and 22 certificates at the Nursing Pinning. On Tuesday, May 7th, 10 certificates were awarded to graduates of the Law Enforcement Academy. In total, 288 students received credentials, including 166 associate degrees and 156 certificates, each representing a unique story of achievement. This amounts to a total of 322 academic credentials being awarded. Additionally, 18 students graduated Cum Laude, 26 students graduated Magna Cum Laude, and eight graduated Summa Cum Laude.



Our summer enrollment FTE has increased by 17% as of last week. This is in part due to an increase in Nursing and Cosmetology courses. Nursing has a larger LPN class at 48 when compared to 22 at this time last year. Cosmetology is up to 25 from 15! Additionally, we are offering new summer courses that a lot of our high school concurrent students are taking advantage of. These courses include Speech, English 1 and 2, and Psychology.

This year, we've created new scholarships to entice local students to attend Otero. We have the Finish Strong Scholarship which is geared toward high school graduates who have 25 college credits that will hopefully encourage them to finish here. They receive three consecutive semesters for free. It is a Last Dollar scholarship meaning it covers what Pell or other scholarships do not cover. A new scholarship we have is the Super Scholar. Each superintendent in our local area gets to choose a senior to receive a \$1k scholarship to Otero. Grades and extracurriculars do not always cover all students who are planning to attend college, so this is a way for school districts to recognize a student who has the capacity and skill set to succeed but maybe does not have the GPA or the right motivating factor to attend college.

### **Create Education without Barriers through Transformational Partnerships**

Last month, Noble Bison, a film crew out of Denver, came to the Otero Campus to film a commercial. They spent the majority of the day here and got footage using our staff and students. They have gone through the initial cut, and we are currently awaiting the second round of edits. It was an exciting process for our students, and we are eager to see the outcome.

The Arkansas Valley Regional Science Fair concluded and had students that moved on to the Colorado Science and Engineering Fair. Students from La Junta and Rocky Ford competed against 263 finalists from across the state. They participated in 6 of 12 categories.

Participants in the 69th Annual Colorado Science and Engineering Fair from the Arkansas Valley Regional Fair were G. Silver Murphy 8th Grade La Junta, Kellen McClure – 6th Grade Rocky Ford, Terra McClure – 8th Grade Rocky Ford, Julian Chapa – 10th Grade La Junta, Isaiah Peralta – 10th Grade La Junta, Zoey Montoya – 11th Grade La Junta, Jann Angelli Bacolod – 12th Grade Rocky Ford, Everett Ediger – 12th Grade La Junta and Kendyl Osborn – 6th Grade La Junta. Additionally, Jennifer Gardner – 12th Grade Swink, was selected to compete but was unable to attend.

**Organizational Special Award winners:** Kendyl Osborn from La Junta: Colorado Mineral Society \$35 and Colorado State University – College of Agricultural Sciences \$500

**Category Award winners:** Animal Sciences Junior Division: Kellen McClure from Rocky Ford – Honorable Mention

Behavioral & Social Sciences Senior: Zoey Montoya and Everett Ediger both from La Junta – 2nd Place and \$125

Plant Sciences: Jann Angelli Bacolod of Rocky Ford Senior Division – Honorable Mention

All students were judged by multiple experts in their chosen category. The students who participated in the fair also had the opportunity to attend a talk by Dr. Bryan Willson, Executive Director, CSU Energy Institute and participate in a wide variety of campus tours ranging from the Multifunctional Polymer & Composites Lab, Department of Biology, Star Lab and many more.



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Otero College is pleased to announce the completion of its Facilities Master Plan, a comprehensive document outlining the college's vision and priorities for campus development and improvement over the next five years.

The Master Plan, developed in collaboration with HGF Architects, was the result of a cooperative process that engaged internal campus members, including staff, faculty, and students, as well as stakeholders from the local community. There were facilitated focus group meetings and surveys that gathered input and prioritized campus needs.

The plan was led by Otero's Vice President of Business and Administrative Services, Jenn Johnston.

The goals of the Facilities Master Plan were to create a comprehensive plan that defines and supports the college's current and future needs, including community use. The plan includes a new and updated facilities assessment, including an FCI (Facility Condition Index) evaluation of all building equipment and repair, as well as addressing campus-wide technology and safety concerns.

The Master Plan also established a flexible review process for identifying Otero College and community input in the context of a vision and values defined by Otero. This will ensure that all projects and initiatives align with the college's mission and priorities.

The Master Plan outlines a phased implementation schedule over the next five years, with specific projects planned for each year. This plan will be used to request State Capital Construction Funds for the next five years. The yearly requests will be as follows: Phase 1 will include the construction of a new welding shop. Phase 2 will be an addition and remodel to McBride Hall, and updates to Student Services and will also focus on remodels in McDivitt Hall – Cosmetology and Construction areas.

Phase 3 will involve upgrades to McDivitt Gym, New Locker Rooms and additional office space and Soccer Field upgrades. This phase also includes the planned replacement of Wunch Hall, which is not state-funded. Phase 4 will include updates in the Humanities Center and Theatre and Life Science and Wheeler Hall. Finally, Phase 5 will include maintenance and mechanical updates to Macdonald Hall and the repurposing of the tennis courts near the auxiliary gym.

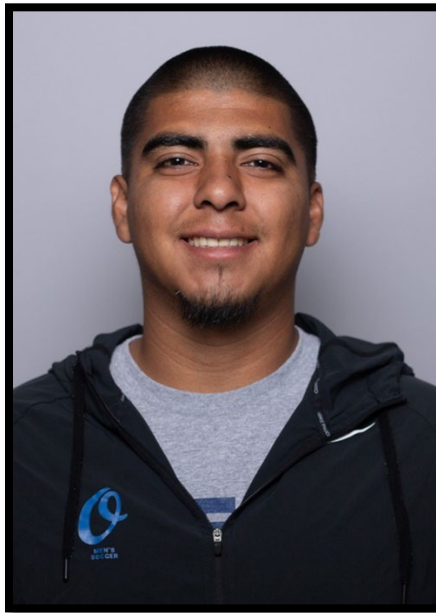


## Transform Our Own Workforce Experience

Otero College is pleased to announce that Alberto Garcia will take the helm as the new head coach of the men's soccer program, bringing with him a passion for developing strong student-athletes.

As an integral part of the men's soccer team for the past eight months, Garcia has played a crucial role in overseeing and managing budgets, planning and coaching daily sessions, as well as developing relationships with stakeholders on and off campus. His dedication to the program has already yielded a positive impact, with a marked improvement in team culture, player accountability, and academic performance. The team's GPA has risen to 3.2, with several athletes currently holding 4.0s.

Throughout his coaching career, Coach Garcia has achieved several notable accolades, including being a NJCAA D1 Region 9 Finalist as a player and coach, an NCAA D2 RMAC Champion as a coach, an NCAA D2 Super Region 4 Champion as a coach, and an NCAA D2 National Finalist as a coach.



Additionally, we've been fortunate to hire a new member to our Security team. Juan Ramirez began his duties on May 13th. We've also had two staff members transition positions: our former part-time tutor, Samantha Hernandez is now our part-time EAB Navigate Coordinator, and Linsay Sumpter, our former Head Rodeo Coach will now take on the role of Agriculture Business Faculty.