



We're Focused on Your Future!

Otero College
President's Report
November 2021
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Transform the Student Experience

Heather Broussard, sophomore at Otero College, has been selected as the editor of the *Chinook*, a literary compilation that highlights student and community writings and art. This year marks the 50th year of the *Chinook* publication. Originally from Houston, Texas, Broussard graduated from Springwoods High School in 2012. She and her fiancé moved to La Junta a little over a year ago. She is a business major who plans to go into accounting. Once she has completed her associates, she plans to transfer to a four-year college to obtain a bachelor's degree. In addition to numbers, Broussard also enjoys literature and getting in tune with her creative side.

Chinook, meaning warm wind, was introduced to the Otero campus by former professor, Dr. Tim Walsh who sponsored the publication for roughly twenty-five years. Department of Arts faculty member, Chris Stork, took on the role of sponsor in 2009. *Chinook* has supported hundreds of writers' voices through poetry, essays, short stories, and artwork. Submissions in each year's publishing are the works of students, people from the La Junta area, surrounding schools, businesses, and community members.



This year, members of the AIM team and Learning Commons staff put together an Altar for the Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos for the first time. Campus community members were invited to utilize this altar in remembrance of their loved ones; supplies were even provided on site. The Day of the Dead is often attributed to Mexico, and while that is the most popularized Country to celebrate this religious tradition (made popular through movies like Coco), many Central and South American countries celebrate in a form of ancestral worship around this time of year.



Create Education without Barriers through Transformational Partnerships

Otero College's Softball Team used one of their Saturday mornings to clean up a section of Highway 50 in and outside of La Junta. A group of 21 athletes walked approximately five miles of highway collecting trash and bagging it. Otero coordinated with Clean Valley Recycling for this project. According to Olivia Woytiuk, a freshman at Otero, "The softball team really appreciates the community's support, and this is one way that we can support the community." The Otero College Softball Team begins their season in Jan. of 2022.



Georgii Trishin, an Otero College student from Moscow, Russia, had the opportunity to immerse himself into a living history event that just might have changed his life. He was able to participate in the 200th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail opening as a commercial route, which was celebrated partially at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, among other locations, from Sept. 23-26.

Otero's AIM Grant and International Relations Office coordinated efforts to make this possible. AIM Grant Faculty Professional Development Lead and Student Research Coordinator, Dr. Kimberly Munro, realized after a presentation from a ranger that works at Bent's Fort, that Trishin was interested and facilitated the encounter for him.

Trishin is a student participating in the Year of Exchange in America for Russians (YEAR) program at Otero College. He is attending Otero for the fall semester but will then return to school at the Russian State Agrarian University - Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy (RSAU-MTAA) in Moscow, Russia. Due to covid, he was not able to attend Otero in-person last year. One of his goals is to learn more about American culture and education and apply that knowledge when he returns to Russia. Upon his return, he will finish a bachelor's degree in agriculture economics, although, after spending time at Bent's Old Fort, he has an additional degree in mind.

He shared, "This weekend volunteering was the best. I learned about U.S. History in the middle of the 19th century. I explored living history and became interested and now would like to find something similar when I go back to Russia. The activities at Bent's Fort have inspired me to change my priorities and now I would also like to get a degree in history," said Trishin. "I learned that the National Park Service is not just about preserving nature, but also about preserving the history of a location. It is my hope that more students and young people will become interested in history."



Transform Our Own Workforce Experience

The Medical Laboratory Technician Program at Otero College received a ten-year Accreditation Award from the National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS). The Phlebotomy program received a five-year award. NAACLS is the premier agency for accreditation and approval of laboratory science programs. Programs must meet rigorous education standards to guarantee that graduates possess entry level competencies. Upon completion of a NAACLS accredited program, students are eligible to take a national board exam through the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP). The process of accreditation is through external peer review. Ten years is the maximum award for the NAACLS Accreditation.

The Medical Laboratory Technician Program and Phlebotomy Certificate Program at Otero were started in Jan. of 2013. The program was granted full accreditation in 2016. Since its beginning, the program has granted 91 phlebotomy certificates and 21 MLT Associate of Applied Science Degrees.

They are set to graduate their 7th class of Medical Laboratory Technicians (MLTs). The class will be celebrating with a pinning ceremony on Nov. 29 at 4 p.m. in the Ed Stafford Theatre with a reception to follow.

On Nov. 8, three retired Otero employees were awarded the status of Emeritus; Almabeth Kaess, Brenda Mueller, and Guy Randall.

Almabeth Kaess, retired Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management, began at Otero in Aug. of 2001 as the Director of Marketing and Executive Assistant to the President. In 2008, she became the Director of Marketing and Development. During that same year, she reactivated the OJC Foundation that had gone dormant several years prior. She was a strong contributor to the grant writing processes on campus, helping Otero to obtain millions of dollars in grant funding. She also sponsored the formation of the Otero College Rodeo Team, serving as the head coach for their first full year. In 2011, Kaess became the Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management. She was the communications director until 2012, writing, editing, and publishing all press releases. In addition, she created, edited, and revised the Otero Catalogue for many years. She was a member of the President's Cabinet and a respected member of campus. This is all merely a scratch on the surface of what Kaess did for Otero in her 20-year tenure.

Brenda Mueller, Psychology Faculty, has been a faculty member at Otero since 2004. She started as a part-time, or adjunct instructor, and then transitioned to full-time status in 2013. During this time, Mueller built a reputation for being a student-centered instructor who constantly had her classes overflowing with students wanting to have her as a teacher. One of many accomplishments, was developing a new course called Positive Psychology that she shared with students and employees that was very well received. Although she officially retired in the spring of 2021, she did agree to continue

teaching through the current fall semester to help transition her replacement into the position.

Guy Randall, retired Webmaster/Portal Administrator, retired in June of 2021 after dedicating 15 years to Otero. He began in 2006 as an independent contractor to manage the college's website. Randall became a part-time employee in 2008 and transitioned to full-time in 2010. As Webmaster/Portal Administrator, he was the driving force for five website re-designs. Beginning in 2014, he worked for a year and a half to remove the old website and built a brand new one from scratch. It was built upon a content management system supported by software purchased with grant funding. In early 2020 he launched the current website design. Randall also tracked Google Analytics faithfully each month and used that data to tweak and upgrade areas of the website.



Andee Leininger, Otero recruiter, shared the following information.

Recruitment Efforts Completed in Fall 2021

- Andee attended college fairs in the following locations:
 - Grand Junction
 - Fruita
 - Fort Collins
 - Berthoud
 - Estes Park
 - Johnstown
 - Limon
 - Burlington
 - Severance
 - Pueblo
 - Manitou Springs

- Colorado Springs
- Lamar
- Otero College (we welcomed more than 180 local students)
- Pueblo
- Trinidad
- Canon City
- Woodland Park
- Alamosa
- Virtual college fair on Zoom
- Discovery Day on October 19th – we welcomed more than 50 students
- Andee attended the San Louis Valley Career Fair in November
- Presentations were given to HS seniors at the following locations
 - Cheraw HS
 - Rye HS
 - Fowler HS
- Group Campus Tours have been given/organized for:
 - Vilas High School (Sept 28th)
 - Atlas Prep HS in Springs (Dec 2nd)
 - Rocky Ford 7th Graders (Mar 22nd)
- Presentations/visits that are in the works:
 - La Junta HS
 - Las Animas HS
 - Swink HS
 - Crowley HS
- Approximately 30 tours will have been given by Christmas, to prospective students who signed up for a tour through our website.
- Andee and Angela gave campus tours on the Saturday and Sunday before Fall classes started
- Angela hosted the Fall 2021 Otero Service Area Counselor Breakfast in November. Local high school counselors were invited to campus for a working breakfast to meet new Otero staff, learn about updates to the concurrent enrollment registration process, gain information regarding new opportunities at Otero for their high school students, and provide insight to Otero staff and faculty on the changing needs of their students.

In addition to these tangible recruitment efforts, the Enrollment Management and Marketing team have been working diligently to rebrand Otero College. Logos have been updated, the website is getting a facelift as well as redesigned navigation to assist with ease of locating information on the site, and marketing materials are being redesigned. The EM team is also restructuring communication efforts that are sent to new inquiries and applicants based on different cohorts and analyzing the current institutional scholarship program to determine if there is a need for change to be more appealing to prospective students.