



*We're Focused on Your Future!*

Otero College  
President's Report  
November 2023  
Kimberly Zant, Ed.D.

### Transform the Student Experience

**The Medical Laboratory Technician Program's** 1st and 2nd year classes competed in a Cell Bowl sponsored by the American Society of Clinical Pathologists. This is a national tournament between 65 teams from 30 states of both MLT and MLS schools. The object is to achieve the highest cell quiz score by identifying hematological blood cells. The goal is to have fun while preparing for the ASCP Board exams and learning cell identification.

Otero's MLT Program was in the playoffs as one of 12 teams. They made it through to the semi-final round! Pictured are the MLT students and the two Otero instructors.



Otero College's Student Life and Enrollment Services are excited to invite the community to **Frost Fest**, a magical holiday event that promises an evening filled with joy and togetherness. Taking place on Wed. Dec. 6 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., this first Frost Fest aims to create lasting memories and celebrate the spirit of unity.

The Frost Fest committee invites everyone, regardless of age, to enjoy a festive evening filled with various activities. Guests can lace up ice skates and experience the exhilaration of ice skating on an outdoor rink. The heartwarming tree lighting ceremony will captivate the imagination and kindle the holiday spirit within all who attend.

Creativity will be unleashed at the crafting booths, where attendees can design personalized holiday decorations. Additionally, a petting zoo will offer the opportunity to interact with friendly animals, adding an extra touch of enchantment to the event. Guests can indulge in winter treats and sip on hot cocoa, creating the perfect combination of warmth and delight. The joyful atmosphere will be further enhanced by live music and entertainment, ensuring that attendees are immersed in the essence of the holiday season.



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

**The Otero Dance Studio** is thrilled to announce its annual holiday performances, “Fire and Ice,” taking place on Friday, December 1 and Saturday, December 2 at 7 p.m. both nights. The performances will be held at the Ed Stafford Theatre on the Otero College campus.

This semester, Otero Dance has taken inspiration from the dichotomy of Fire and Ice, fusing together the electrifying energy of Rock and Roll and the enchanting melodies of Christmas music. Audiences can expect a dynamic showcase of talent, as these dedicated dancers take the stage, performing a diverse range of dance genres including ballet, jazz, acrobatics, and Creative Movement featuring our youngest dancers. Our talented dancers, spanning ages three to adult, bring to life the powerful music of renowned artists such as Trans-Siberian Orchestra. In addition to these exciting

performances, there will be special surprise acts that are sure to add an extra layer of excitement to the event.

**International Foods Night** was a huge success. On Thursday, November 9. Three courses were served that showcased meals from countries that represent some of our students. 75 students from 35 countries have enrolled at Otero College for the fall semester. Students performed poetry in Russian and others sang songs from their childhood. Also, the Mariachi Lobos were hired to end out the night with singing and dancing. It was a big hit with several of our students. In addition to the entertainment, live and silent auctions were held to support student scholarships.

International students at Otero College are enrolled in nursing, construction, cosmetology, associate degree seeking and medical lab technician programs. They are teammates on the soccer, basketball, wrestling, rodeo, volleyball, baseball, golf, and rodeo 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.



Arranged by local community members, Otero hosted an **Entrepreneurship Fair** for K-12 students. The event was held on Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Zant judged the projects and shared that there were several great ideas. This event brought over 100 students to campus to share their ideas and hopefully gave them a positive experience on our campus to help with recruitment down the road.

Otero's official **food pantry** is now up and running with student employees to monitor items coming in and going out. We have had food shelves placed around campus for several years due to the generosity of faculty and staff, but we recently have been able to expand to a full room with food for meals and not just snacks.

## **Transform Our Own Workforce Experience**

**Facilities Master Plan update:** Otero College is inviting all members of the supporting community to participate in a town hall event to help shape the future of Otero campus facilities. Otero College values the insights and ideas of the community members and believes that your input is vital to the College's continuous improvement.

The event will take place at the Otero College Rizzuto Banquet Room on Tues., Dec. 5, 2023, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. This town hall meeting aims to foster an environment of open dialogue and collaboration, allowing for the exchange of innovative ideas and suggestions to enhance the infrastructure and amenities across Otero's campus.

Over the past two months, Otero College administration, faculty, staff, and students have worked to identify and prioritize projects on campus that will best support student mental/physical health and safety, improvement of campus classroom and community buildings, residence halls, and athletic facilities, as well as develop a wish list for what they would like the Otero College campus to look like in the next five to ten years.

Stakeholder perspectives and recommendations will play a pivotal role in shaping Otero College's next Facilities Master Plan, ensuring that our facilities align with the evolving needs and aspirations of our vibrant community.

**Otero has hired** just a couple of new and returning faces over the last month. Bethany Bender was hired on as the TRiO Advisory/Success Coach. She earned a degree in Environmental Sustainability from the University of Northern Colorado. She is a native of La Junta and is invested in the community. Lavona Tyscka returned to Otero after a brief stint in the local area schools. Previously working in the nursing department, Lavona is now the AIM Mentoring Coordinator and Professional Tutor. We are excited to have her back and welcome Bethany aboard!