



We're Focused on Your Future!

Otero College
President's Report
September 2022
Timothy Alvarez, Ph.D.

Transform the Student Experience

Otero College will be hosting Grupo Folklórico del Pueblo on Thurs. Oct. 6 at 7 p.m. in the Ed Stafford Theatre. The People's Folk Group is a non-profit Mexican Folk dance organization. Their mission is to educate and perform folk cultural arts emphasizing Southern Colorado's Culturally diverse identities while promoting community involvement, preservation of culture, and the emotional and physical development of children, youth, and adults.



Our Student Life Committee has hosted several events this semester so far to engage the students and aid in retention. Some of those events were, The Great Egg Toss Challenge, career exploration presentations,

Create Education without Barriers through Transformational Partnerships

Sept. 12-16, Otero College celebrated National Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Week. HSIs are defined as institutions of higher education that have an enrollment of

undergraduate, full-time equivalent, students that are at least 25% Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application. Enrollment data shows that in 2021, Otero was at 39.5%. Recognized HSIs are eligible for federal grants to expand their educational opportunities for Hispanic students.

Otero's Student Life hosted several events for students to participate in such as sharing a YouTube video of Gina Garcia on "Defining Servingness for Hispanic Serving Institutions." They had Pan Dulce y Café on Wednesday and Thursday they had Aupa Fresca y Horchata and a mariachi band serenaded the students on the patio during their dinner.

La Junta Tourism is hosting the First Annual La Junta Tarantula Fest on Oct. 7 and 8 in downtown La Junta. There will be a parade, vendors, tours, and an information pavilion, among other things. In coordination with the festival committee, Otero College, with Warren McClure, Biology Faculty and Math and Science Department Chair organizing the event, will host Dr. Paula Cushing as she shares a presentation on arachnids.

Dr. Cushing, is a senior curator of invertebrate zoology at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, is slated to give her talk from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 7 in the Otero College Learning Commons inside Wheeler Hall. She will have live specimens with her for all to view.



Otero College is the process of applying for a repository certification through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of Colorado. This certification will allow Otero to house archaeological and paleontological artifacts discovered in southeast Colorado so students and faculty can conduct future research, and so we can preserve the history of our region. It will house items such as the piece of clay pottery shown below. Kimberly Munro, Anthropology Faculty and Director of Undergraduate Research recently received a box of artifacts that were found in along the Purgatory River near La Junta. They had been loaned to a researcher from C.U. Boulder in 1983 and were found

and returned after a recent professor retired. Many of the artifacts were excavated by Otero's own archaeology instructor, Galen Baker in the 1970's.



Transform Our Own Workforce Experience

Meagan Hotchkiss-Trejo, Coordinator of Educational Technology at Otero College, will be presenting at the 8th European Immersive Education Summit on October 6 - 8 in Lucerne, Switzerland. Hotchkiss-Trejo's presentation is about her work and the collaboration with the United States Park Service and Otero that began in 2014. This work is to build Historic Bent's Fort in Minecraft and make it virtual and accessible from anywhere in the world. Bent's Fort is part of the National Parks Service and is located East of La Junta. Built in 1833, Bent's Fort was significant in the trade and expansion of the American Southwest. Through Hotchkiss-Trejo's work with the Immersive Education Initiative, Otero has the privilege of being one of the first in the world to use a new form of VR (Virtual Reality) technology for teaching. She is hoping to expand and finish this project in the future. The presentation is about what has been accomplished to date.



Kyle Herring has been named as the new Head Women's Basketball Coach at Otero College for the 22-23 season. Herring has over ten years of experience coaching at the college level. He began his duties on Sept. 22. After having worked at Wesleyan College, Chipola College, South Plains College, and Cumberland University, Herring was chosen to lead the Lady Rattlers. At Chipola College, he amassed a top three NJCAA National Tournament ranking, an Elite 8 finish as well as being the 2014-15 NJCAA National Champions. At Cumberland University, he helped recruit a team who set several records for the school as well as coaching a team that was rated #18 in the country in defensive points per game (2011), #6 in the country in defensive points per game (2012), #3 in the country in field goal percentage defense (2012). While in his previous roles, he gained experience recruiting students, developing budgets, conducting surveys on retention, coordinating game schedules, helping with floor practice with emphasis on post player development, produced scouting reports, and more.