



We're Focused on Your Future!

Otero College
President's Report
March 2023
Timothy Alvarez, Ph.D.

Transform the Student Experience

The Otero College Community Jazz Ensemble is shared a special concert/rehearsal that was open to the public in partnership with the AIM Program on campus. The event was held on Tues. Feb. 21, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the Ed Stafford Theatre.

The Jazz Ensemble is open to Otero students and community members. They perform a mix of traditional jazz tunes as well as new age. The community ensemble first formed in Spring 2022 and rehearse on Tuesday nights. They are always looking for new members to join them!

On March 7, 2023, cadets in Otero's Law Enforcement Training Academy (LETA) spent the day living in someone else's shoes. In partnership with Otero's Accessibility Services Office, Otero's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Council, and Sodexo Food Services, cadets in the LETA completed an 8-hour course on "Interacting with Persons with Disabilities". Careful planning took place to ensure the President's Cabinet, Sodexo Food Services, and the campus community were informed about the exercise.

The 8-hour course began in the LETA classroom, where cadets were introduced to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), case studies on negative police interactions with persons with disabilities, and relevant Colorado Laws. From there, cadets moved to Otero's Learning Commons where they met with Frida Beyerl, Otero's Accessibility Services Coordinator, and completed a white cane obstacle course to experience what people with a visual impairment may experience on a daily basis.

Next up was a panel discussion with Mrs. Beyerl and an Otero student. The discussion centered around living with a visual impairment and working with or living with children on the autism spectrum.

Following the panel discussion, cadets participated in an empathy exercise in the Rattler Den, Otero's main cafeteria. Fraker outfitted six cadets with blindfolds and white canes, one student with a wheelchair, one student with an arm sling covered by a hoodie, and the rest with earplugs. Cadets walked from their classroom to the main cafeteria where they had to get lunch, eat lunch, clean up after themselves, and go back to class.

Director Fraker hopes the events of the day will lead to positive results in the future. Their experiences were wide ranging from basic disorientation and confusion, to heightened anxiety. However, after 8 hours of active, participatory learning, Otero's LETA cadets now have a better understanding of disabilities, and more empathy towards people who are living with them.



Four Otero College wrestlers, Isaiah Gamez, Adam Schulz, Matt Santos, and Gavin Howes, qualified for and competed in the National Junior College Athletic Association National Championship for wrestling. The tournament was held at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa March 3-4.

Isaiah Gamez, wrestling at 125, is in his sophomore year at Otero. His record is 11-3 on the season. He was the Region 9 Tournament runner up.

Adam Schulz, at 174, is also a sophomore at Otero and his record is 6-6 on the season. He finished in third place at the Region 9 Tournament.

Matt Santos, at 184 has a record of 14-12 this season. A sophomore at Otero, he was the Region 9 Tournament runner up.

Gavin Howes, is a sophomore this year, and he placed 3rd at the Regional Tournament earning him the ability to wrestle at the National Tournament. He had a 10-15 record this season.

While they were not able to attain all of their goals, they all wrestled well and represented Otero well.



Create Education without Barriers through Transformational Partnerships

On Feb. 22, 2023, members and sponsors of the Otero College Non-Traditional Student Organization (NTSO) donated \$250 to Ark Valley Hospice from the proceeds of their Breast Cancer Awareness sale held in October. Pink fish and flowers were newly added this year to their regular roster of items for sale that included pens, key chains, and other selections. NTSO also coordinated a winter gear drive this year. Items that were collected were distributed to Otero students who needed help staying warm during the cold winter months. The Non-Traditional Student Organization awards scholarships each semester and provides networking with other non-traditional students every other Friday.



The annual Girls in the Middle Conference was held on Sat., March 4, at Otero College from 9 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The theme of this year's conference was "Rivers of Discovery" and will encourage middle school aged girls to traverse the exciting world of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM).

The theme was carried out throughout the day in hands-on workshops with collaboration and example from women in STEAM careers.

The goal of the conference is to encourage middle school aged girls to continue studying science, technology, and math once they enter high school. In March 2022, 200 girls from 12 local area schools, as well as homeschooled students in southeastern Colorado attended the conference learning about careers that require an advanced education in the study of science, technology, engineering, arts or math. Workshops were presented by professional women who are actively working in their careers. This year's conference hosted 18 different career workshops that were taught by women who are working in the fields of: Aerospace/Rocket Science, Archaeology, Dentistry, ER nursing, Information Technology, Nursing Simulation, Paramedic/EMT, Colorado State Patrol, Veterinarian, Water Engineer, and Water Treatment. The afternoon session had the exciting return of the Air Force Academy, who presented various hands-on sessions relating to physics.



The Otero College Foundation, in conjunction with Otero College's nursing and allied health department, is bringing back the annual Excellence in Healthcare Gala on April 7, 2023, in the Otero College Rizzuto Banquet Room. Scheduled for 6 p.m., the event will include a full dinner, auction, basket raffle, a speaker and more. This event is designed to honor those working in all health care practice areas as well as to raise scholarship funding for students in Otero's allied health programs.

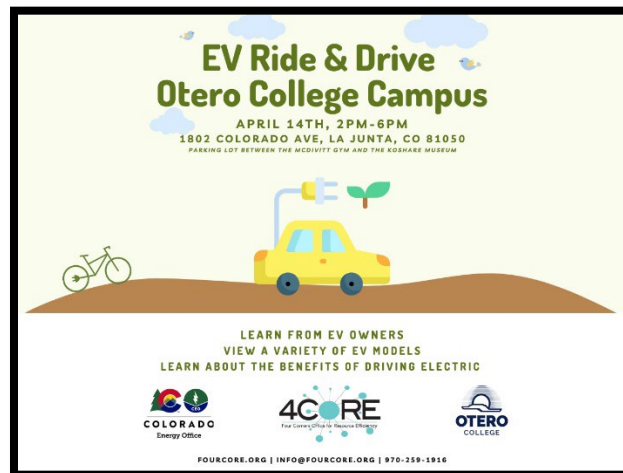
All money raised will support student scholarships through the Kay Mahoney Memorial Scholarship Fund for nursing and allied health students. This scholarship awards up to

\$1,500 per year. Applicants must be accepted into a healthcare program at Otero prior to application; hold at least a 2.5 GPA; and demonstrate a commitment to ongoing community service.

In partnership with 4CORE (Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency), science faculty member, Dr. Allan Nolan and Otero College will be hosting the EV Ride and Drive event on Friday, April 14 from 2 – 6 p.m. at the parking lot to the north of the McDivitt Center Gymnasium. All are welcome to attend and learn more about Electric Vehicles (EVs).

At this event, there will be multiple electric vehicles on display in the parking lot to allow anyone who is interested in learning about EVs to see them in person and ask 4CORE and EV owners questions. EV owners in La Junta and surrounding towns (Trinidad, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, etc.) will be invited to bring their vehicles, so there should be a wide variety of automobiles to examine. 4CORE will have a booth set up in the parking lot as a hub for questions.

4CORE serves Southwest Colorado by promoting resource conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy through education and programs that strengthen the local economy and foster a healthy, sustainable environment. They have partnered with Dr. Allan Nolan, who is an EV owner himself, to share their message with the campus and the community to bring awareness and answer questions.



Transform Our Own Workforce Experience

Otero College is excited to welcome Alex Acosta to the rattler family as he takes on the duties as Head Men's and Women's Golf Coach. He began in his position on March 1, 2023.

We also recently hired Matthew Miller as the new Head Men's Soccer Coach. He comes to Otero from Webber International University, in Babson Park, FL where he was the Head Assistant Coach for both the Men's and Women's Soccer Team. He began on March 17, and we are excited to have him.

As most already know, Dr. Alvarez has announced his retirement from Otero College. Expect more to come as we have more information to share.