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## September 2019

Jason L. Johnson

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### Abstract

Approximately one year ago (September 5, 2018, to be exact), Dr. Peter Grant announced his intent to retire as Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. That his official retirement date would not be for another ten months was testament to his reputation as a meticulous planner. It also showed his unabating commitment to the welfare of SWOSU. Indeed, for the four months after my own selection to... [Read More](#)

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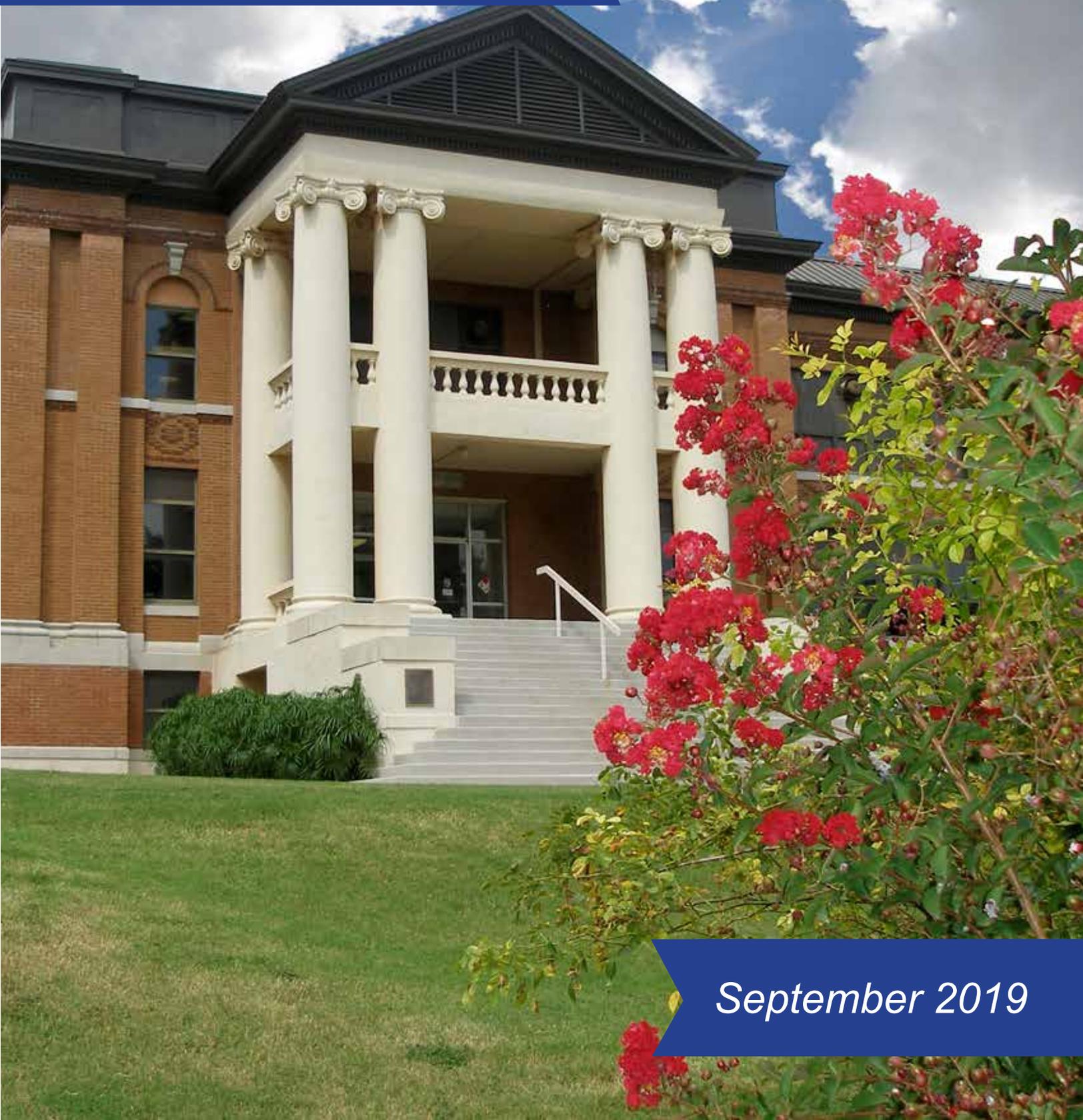
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# aCAademicS

The Newsletter of the  
SWOSU College of Arts & Sciences



*September 2019*

## Transitions

Approximately one year ago (September 5, 2018, to be exact), Dr. Peter Grant announced his intent to retire as Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. That his official retirement date would not be for another ten months was testament to his reputation as a meticulous planner. It also showed his unabating commitment to the welfare of SWOSU. Indeed, for the four months after my own selection to succeed Dean Grant, he arranged a series of informational meetings to ease the transition and to relieve the burden of “recreating the wheel”.

Dr. Grant’s retirement bio appeared in the 2019 Bernhardt Program for the “Evening of Academic Excellence”, as follows:

Pete grew up in Erie, PA, and earned degrees in Biology at Pennsylvania State University, the University of North Texas, and Florida State University. His first full-time teaching gig was at Morris College in Sumter, SC, for three years. He became a member of the Biology faculty at SWOSU in 1988. Since then he served as President of the Faculty Senate, Chair of Biology for seven years, and Dean of Arts & Sciences for the last five years. Pete was honored with the Bernhardt Academic Excellence Award in 2004. He studied aquatic insects called mayflies and has involved 14 students in that research. These students have co-authored 25 presentations at local, state, regional, national, and international presentations and one student was a coauthor for a peer-review publication. He created *The Mayfly Newsletter*; an international publication that was distributed to over 400 people in 51 countries. Pete was honored at the most recent international mayfly conference with a lifetime achievement award.

So much of what we all now embrace as CAS traditions was started during Dr. Grant’s 5-year term as Dean. Notwithstanding his “Dean’s Delicious Dead-Day Donuts”, *aCAademicS* stands out as one of the most impactful of Dr. Grant’s established traditions. Since its inception in 2014, this newsletter has continued to share the many accomplishments of CAS students, alumni, faculty, and emeriti across state, national, and even international borders via its accessibility on SWOSU Digital Commons.

My goal is thus to continue onward and try to match the high ideals set forth in the previous sixty volumes of the *aCAademicS* newsletter. Luckily, there is never a shortage of achievements, events, and performances to write about within SWOSU’s College of Arts & Sciences. So here we begin with Volume 61. “Inspiration, move me brightly”—because any homage to Dr. Grant MUST end with a Grateful Dead quote.



Jason Johnson, Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences

## Summer is Not All Fun n' Games—Fifteen CAS Students Earn Degrees

We are pleased to announce that the following students have completed requirements to earn bachelor's or master's degrees this summer within the College of Arts & Sciences at SWOSU.

|                   |                   |                       |                                    |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bradley Rowson    | Altus, OK         | Bachelor of Arts      | Communication Arts                 |
| Sheldon Wilson    | Anadarko, OK      | Bachelor of Arts      | Interdisciplinary Studies          |
| Hector Lopez      | Bethany, OK       | Master of Music       | Performance                        |
| Joel Kliewer      | Corn, OK          | Bachelor of Science   | Environmental & Organismal Biology |
| Tommy Smith       | Elk City, OK      | Bachelor of Music     | Orchestral                         |
| Devan Bettancourt | Kingfisher, OK    | Bachelor of Music ED  | Instrumental / General Emphasis    |
| Josue Ruiz        | Marlow, OK        | Bachelor of Science   | Engineering Physics                |
| Morgan Corona     | Oklahoma City, OK | Bachelor of Music     | Music Therapy                      |
| Sean Johnson      | Oklahoma City, OK | Master of Music ED    | Instrumental / General Emphasis    |
| Yajayara Perez    | Oklahoma City, OK | Bachelor of Arts      | Communication Arts                 |
| Anthony Valentine | Oklahoma City, OK | Bachelor of Music     | Orchestral                         |
| Hunter Hines      | Sayre, OK         | Bachelor of Science   | Biological Sciences                |
| Mandi Foutch      | Seiling, OK       | Bachelor of Science   | Biological Sciences                |
| Austin Hardman    | Weatherford, OK   | Bachelor of Music     | Orchestral                         |
| Amanda Owens      | Weatherford, OK   | Bachelor of Fine Arts | Two-Dimensional Studio             |

Congratulations graduates!

### Events

The Weatherford Arts Council hosted the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Arts Academy on July 22-26. Featured in the event were lessons in dance choreography, violin and ukulele, acting, and art. **Dr. Todd Parker**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Art, Communication & Theater at SWOSU, provided hands-on art history activities for student participants.

On August 8, the Weatherford Arts Council sponsored a songwriting and poetry workshop at the SWOSU Business Enterprise Center. Among those volunteering, **Dr. Jill Jones Tourian**, Professor Emeritus from the Department of Language & Literature, taught breakout sessions of beginning poetry.

### Grant Funding

Congratulations to the following CAS faculty for their successful acquisition of external funding in support of on-going research and scholarly activity: (continued)

## CAS Contacts

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## CAS News (cont.)

### Dr. Chris Horton, Department of Biological Sciences

- Dr. Horton received an OK-INBRE Research Project Investigator Grant in support of “*Mechanisms influencing expression of B7-H4, a target in cancer therapy*”. The grant is in the amount of \$322,583 distributed over three years; it is only one of two such grants awarded to regional universities in support of biomedical research.

### Dr. Tim Hubin, Department of Chemistry & Physics

- Dr. Hubin was awarded a grant by OK-INBRE through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education entitled “*INBRE SMART Student*” in the amount of \$6,000. The grant in part supports a summer research experience for a freshman or sophomore undergraduate student.
- Dr. Hubin was awarded a grant by OK-INBRE to serve as a research mentor for a junior or senior student participating in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP). The award included \$2,200 in supply costs provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to support research in the area of “*Pentaazamacrocyclic chemokine receptor antagonists*” with potential applications in fighting HIV, cancer, asthma, and other inflammatory conditions.
- Dr. Hubin received a 3-year, \$70,000 grant from the Petroleum Research Fund of the American Chemical Society to examine the “High valent Pd and Ni complexes of topologically constrained azamacrocycles for catalytic organometallic C-C bond formation”.

### Dr. Vijay Somalinga, Department of Biological Sciences

Dr. Somalinga was awarded a grant by OK-INBRE through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education entitled “*Identification and Characterization of novel virulence factors from Streptococcus sanguinis, an opportunistic pathogen involved in subacute infective endocarditis*” in the amount of \$6,000. The grant in part supports a summer research experience for a freshman or sophomore undergraduate student.

- Dr. Somalinga was awarded a grant by OK-INBRE to serve as a research mentor for a junior or senior student participating in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP). The award included \$2,200 in supply costs provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to support research in the area of “*Biochemical and Structural Characterization of beta carbonic anhydrases from an emerging pathogen, Rhodococcus hoagii*”.

## Presentations & Publications

**Dr. Kenneth Thompson** in the Department of Language and Literature attended the 40th Annual Southwest Popular/American Culture Association Conference in Weatherford, Oklahoma and presented the paper, “Visions of Apocalypse: The Pedagogy of Sight in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*”.

The SWOSU Trumpet ensemble performed Ronald Lo Presti’s ‘An Overture and a Finale’ at the 44th Annual International Trumpet Guild Conference in Miami, FL. In addition to serving as the opening act to famous trumpeter Marcus Printup, several of the students also participated in trumpet ensembles of students from across the world. **Dr. Richard Tirk**, Associate Professor of Trumpet performed SWOSU alum Jackson Anderson’s work, ‘The Bells’, at a recital of all new works. Dr. Tirk also adjudicated the Youth Solo Competition at the conference.

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**Dr. Howard Kurtz** in the Department of Social Sciences completed a book chapter entitled “Will Teachers Shoot” within the *Handbook of Research on Mass Shootings and Multiple Victims*. Over the Summer months, Dr. Kurtz also served as a media consultant for multiple television reports, including: “Teen Killing Spree in Canada”, the Toronto Star; “Profiling Teen Killers”, Vancouver CITY NEWS; “Police Pursuits”, Fox TV; “Campus Shootings Profiling the Classroom”, ABC NEWS Lawton OK; and “Professor Discusses Active Shooting Factors, Solutions”, Lawton Constitution.

## ***Student Achievements***

This July, senior English major Maggie Logan had a research paper published in Brigham Young University’s *Scholars’ Archive*, a peer-reviewed online journal for undergraduate scholarship in all fields. Maggie’s paper, [“Harriet Beecher Stowe: She’s Not What You Think.”](#) is the product of six months of work. The papers of two 2019 SWOSU graduates, Sam Frans and Alexia Piñon, are in the hands of the editorial board of *The Simms Review*, a peer-reviewed professional literary journal, to be published in 2020. These three papers will be the fourth, fifth, and sixth student papers begun in SWOSU American literature courses to be published in peer-reviewed journals since 2015.

Lexi Clark, a junior Communication Arts major at SWOSU, has been named the 2019-2020 Jack B. Shelton & Walter Crouch Scholar. The Jack B. Shelton & Walter Crouch Memorial Scholarship for the Pursuit of Authentic Journalism was awarded by the SWOSU Department of Art, Communication, & Theater. The fund has been graciously supported by Margaret Shelton in memory of the accomplishments of her late husband Jack B. Shelton and the late Walter Crouch. Lexi has served as Editor-in-Chief of *The Southwestern* newspaper, and she completed an internship with the *Weatherford Daily News*.

The SWOSU Track & Field team was recently honored for its academic excellence by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA). Under the direction of coach Shane Brookshire, the SWOSU Track & Field team received All-Academic Team honors for the second year in a row in boasting a team GPA of 3.22. Participants in the Track & Field team from the College of Arts & Sciences include: Elah Alcuítas, Biomedical; Shayla Noakes, Biological Sciences; Sophia Ramirez, Biological Sciences; and Yvette Tavarez, Biological Sciences.

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## **New Faculty Spotlight**

The College of Arts & Sciences is proud to welcome the following faculty to SWOSU:



Dr. Pragma Sharma earned her Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center and obtained a Bachelor and Master Degree in Pharmacy from India. In her graduate research, she investigated the mechanisms of transcription regulation of hepatic gene expression by thyroid hormone in the liver. Following her Ph.D., she held two postdoctoral fellow positions at the University of Michigan and Northwestern University, Chicago. Her research findings have been published in reputed journals like the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* and *Diabetes*. Her research interests include exploring the role of metabolic enzymes in disease states, including cancer and diabetes, and discovering novel drug targets and approaches to disease treatment. Dr. Sharma begins this year as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences.

Ryan Alexander Johnson was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Leonard and Francine Johnson. He received his Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Langston University in May 2015. In Fall 2015, he joined the chemistry graduate program at Louisiana State University working under Professor Stanley. Ryan graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry in May of 2019, and has just joined the Department of Chemistry & Physics at SWOSU. He is married to Ashley Johnson and has a new baby girl.



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Jolie Hicks recently joined the SWOSU Department of Language and Literature. She received an Associate of Science degree from Navarro College in Corsicana, Texas, a Theology degree from Victory Bible Institute, and a Master of Education in Instructional Coaching from SWOSU. While in college, she married her husband Nate Hicks (of twenty-one years), and together they have three amazing children—Dylon, Brooklyn, and Addyson. She was privileged to teach music and art for pre-k to sixth graders at Western Oklahoma Christian School in Clinton, Oklahoma, for six years. Upon completing her English teaching certification at SWOSU, she joined the Weatherford High School faculty, teaching all grade levels of English (9-12) for the past six years. Other roles in which she has served her school include as the English Language Arts Department Chair, National Honor's Society Selection Committee, Food Pantry Coordinator, Summer Remediation Program Teacher, and Tech Camp Educator. Jolie teaches Composition and Literature, ACT Reading and English Prep, and

Study Skills at Upward Bound on Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Campus. As a writing instructor, she has the perfect opportunity to help students transition from high school to post-secondary education and to assist them with their career goals. In the spring, Jolie Hicks will begin pursuing a Ph.D. in Language, Literacy, and Culture from Oklahoma State University.

Before joining the Department of Language & Literature at SWOSU, Dr. Taylor Orgeron received her Ph.D. from the Department of English at Louisiana State University and her Master Degree in Humanities from the University of Dallas. Her areas of interest include digital rhetoric & culture, digital pedagogy, multimodal composition, and video game studies. Most of her work involves examining the narratives (and critical metanarratives) of indie video games and experimental hyper-texts in order to uncover their pedagogical impact, including how these texts help shape the national, regional, and personal identities of their players/readers. As a proud native of south Louisiana, Dr. Orgeron enjoys Cajun cooking and playing with her dog, Bayou Teche—when she isn't playing video games, of course.



Natasha Tinsley is an Assistant Professor in Language & Literature at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. She is a two-time graduate from Oklahoma State University, where she earned a Bachelors in English and an MFA in Fiction. She also holds a Master in Education from Cameron University. Her research and written works focus on African American people and culture, including but not limited to ideologies surrounding identity, gender roles, and motherhood. Natasha is an active collaborator for a group called *Talking Justice*, an alliance of four women dedicated to bringing racial awareness and inclusion to educational, academic, and social settings. She has also presented at several writing center conferences themed around racial injustice. She uses her academic and creative skills to offer truths she hopes will provide to others the same catharsis and enjoyment she receives.



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Ms. Nafisa Jahanbakht has two Masters Degrees in Mathematics and Pure Mathematics. She will earn another Master's degree in Mathematics Education from Oklahoma State University in Fall 2019 while working within the Department of Mathematics at SWOSU. Ms Jahanbakht taught a variety of courses at University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, and University of Lethbridge. Ms. Jahanbakht enjoys spending time with her family, baking, and reading memoir and biographies.



Erin Suzanne Oselu completed a Bachelor of Music in Music Therapy at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, a Master of Arts in Music Therapy at the University of Missouri- Kansas City, and is working toward completing a Master of Public Administration in Non-Profit Management at the University of Missouri- Kansas City. Ms. Oselu has worked as a music therapist for fourteen years, primarily in the field of mental health, both with youth and adults. Ms. Oselu has taught at the University of Missouri- Kansas City both as a Graduate Teacher's Assistant for two years and as an Instructor of Music Therapy for one year. Ms. Oselu is now excited to serve SWOSU in the role of Instructor of Music Therapy this coming 2019-20 school year!

## Summer Policy Institute

Alberto Manzano, a senior at SWOSU majoring in criminal justice, attended the 2019 Oklahoma Summer Policy Institute held at the University of Tulsa August 4<sup>th</sup> through August 7<sup>th</sup>. The Summer Policy Institute is hosted annually by, and led by the staff of, the Oklahoma Policy Institute (OK Policy), a non-partisan independent policy think-tank, to provide students with a unique opportunity to network with fellow students and community leaders, to become better informed about Oklahoma's most important policy issues, and to prepare for their future studies and work in policy-related occupations. Participants in the Institute are selected through a competitive application process that seeks to find students with strong academic training, diverse experiences, and a clear interest in the study and practice of public policy. Selected students learn about how to research, analyze, and advocate for equitable and fiscally responsible policies in Oklahoma. Alberto was able to specifically learn about OK Policy's Open Justice Oklahoma (OJO) program. OJO seeks to understand and analyze how criminal justice policies have impacted Oklahoma communities, and to develop and advocate for potential reforms that may reduce crime and improve rehabilitation.



Alberto Manzano (bottom row; third from left)

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## American Political Science Association

Dr. Heather Katz in the Department of Social Sciences attended the American Political Science Association's Annual Conference and Exhibition in Washington D.C., where this year's theme was "Populism and Privilege". Dr. Katz presented a work entitled "The Persistence of Digital Divides and Fixed Broadband Alternatives in Rural Oklahoma", and chaired a panel at the national conference on eGovernance.



## "Some Bunny"

### PRINT ON PASEO



MARSHA CARMAN  
"SOME BUNNY"  
HONORABLE MENTION

Ms. Marsha Carman from the Department of Art, Communication, & Theater was awarded Honorable Mention with the submission "Some Bunny" at the Print on Paseo show in Oklahoma City. The Print on Paseo is the Paseo Art Association's annual juried printmaking exhibition. It features a wide range of types of printmaking, from traditional style to contemporary. This exhibition strives to represent and spotlight the depth and diversity of Oklahoma printmakers.

## SWOSU Communication Arts and Psychology Students Attend National Conference for College Women Student Leaders

Victoria Kinsman (Communication Arts and Psychology student) and Andrea Hopper (Psychology student) recently attended the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) hosted by the American Association of University Women. The purpose of the conference is to bring campus student leaders together to network and be inspired to be leaders on their home campuses. The conference is held annually in College Park, Maryland. Students spend 3 days at the University of Maryland engaging in professional workshops and being inspired by women making an impact in business, politics, education, and more. They even spend an afternoon/evening in Washington, D.C.

Thanks to Dr. Robin Jones (Chair of the Department of Arts, Communication, & Theatre), AAUW@SWOSU, AAUW Weatherford, AAUW Oklahoma, and NCCWSL for sponsoring travel for these students to attend this life-transforming experience.



From Left in image—Victoria Kinsman, Sandra Kim (Woman of Distinction honoree), and Andrea Hopper.

## SAGE STEAM Camp and Biology Club Volunteer in Event at the Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark



On Saturday, July 20, SWOSU volunteers from the SAGE STEAM Camp and Biology Club were one of only five groups statewide invited to participate in MVP Field Day at the Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark. The free program hosted by Devon Energy rewards elementary students' achievements in science and math by inviting them as "MVPs" to participate in a series of fun, hands-on activities in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Over 500 students and their families participated. The SWOSU Biology Club provided a learning table for MVPs to learn how to grow microorganisms from leaves, while volunteers in association with the SAGE STEAM Camp assisted students in origami and stomp rockets.

Those in attendance at the SWOSU both included: Front row Dorinda Risenhoover (NASA Representative), Kyla Risenhoover (SAGE STEAMotivator-high school student), Lisa Appeddu (Pharmacy-faculty), Justin Lippard (Senior in Biological Sciences at SWOSU), Elah Alcuitas (Sophomore in Biological Sciences at SWOSU), Jennifer Abshire (Junior in Biological Sciences at SWOSU and SAGE STEAM Counselor); Back row Steve Drinnon (Pharmacy-faculty), Sally Drinnon (Pharmacy-faculty), Caden Bowels (Sophomore in Biological Sciences at SWOSU), and Regina McGrane (Biology-faculty).



Biology Students helping MVPs with leaf presses.



### SWOSU Faculty Member Appointed to State Committee

Ms. Marsha Carman, a SWOSU faculty member in the area of Art and Art Communication, has been appointed to the State Department Of Education Visual Arts Advisory committee. The appointment is for two years. Pictured left to right: Marsha Carman, SWOSU Art/Art Education, and Dr. Elizabeth Maughan, Director of Fine Arts, State Department of Education.

### CAS Happenings

#### September

- 2—Labor Day
- 4—Music Department Faculty Showcase Recital
- 13—Panorama Event: Oklahoma City Philharmonic
- 14—Parents' Day: CAS Dept. Open Houses, Tours, Exhibitions, & Hands-On Activities
- 21-24—Theatre Production of "Our Town"
- 25—Music Jazz Concert: "Funk Night!"
- 26—Music Guest Artist, Pablo Masis Jazz Trio
- 27—Music Faculty Recital: Dr. Matthew Tracy, Saxophone

September 2019

## Chemistry and Engineering Technology Students Participate in SwRI/NASA Workforce Development

One student from the Department of Chemistry within the College of Arts & Sciences and three students from the Department of Engineering Technology within the College of Professional and Graduate Studies recently visited the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) and the Johnson Space Center to learn about careers and internships in science and engineering. SwRI is a contract research and development lab for government and industry contracts. During the visit, students met with scientists and engineers in the areas of sound engineering (Anechoic Chamber and Reverberation Chamber), 3D tissue printing and Biomedical applications, chemical and analytical testing of fuels and lubricants, corrosion testing, environmental testing, ballistics, and space science (the Europa Mission and Planetary Protection, and Design, fabrication, and testing of space craft, modules, and satellites). They were even able to see and hold moon rock samples from the Apollo 11 mission.

While at the Johnson Space Center, visitors celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Tours were taken of the current mission control, the Apollo missions mission control, and the Saturn V rocket. One of the tour guides for the Saturn V rocket, Mack, was an engineer who worked on the rocket design from 50 years ago. What an amazing experience hearing about what happened from someone who had front row seats to history.

Accompanying students on the trip were: Dr. Lori Gwyn, Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs & Continuing Education and Associate Professor of Chemistry and Physics; and Cindi Albrightson, Berrong Endowed Chair of Engineering Technology.

Picture from L—Miryah Adair(Engineering Tech), Kathryn McDowell (Engineering Tech), Makynna Koper (Chemistry), “Mack”(worked on design of Saturn V rocket), Cindi Albrightson (Engineering Tech instructor), and Trey Bidy (Engineering Tech)



## Organizational Fair Welcomes New CAS Students

Each year, the Organizational Fair is held during the renowned Dawg Days, allowing clubs and organizations to welcome new students to SWOSU and encourage them to participate in the many extracurricular opportunities available across campus. Shown below are a few of the CAS booths on display this year.



This publication, *aAcademicS*, is the newsletter of the SWOSU College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), and is published by the office of the Dean of the College. Subscriptions to the *Newsletter* are free. To place your name on the mailing list or to contribute information for the next issue, contact Dr. Jason Johnson, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, 100 Campus Drive, Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096-3098, (580) 774-7152, [jason.johnson@swosu.edu](mailto:jason.johnson@swosu.edu).



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