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SWOSU Faculty Oliver and Aguiñaga Named DaVinci Fellows





Dr. Dana Oliver and Dr. Veronica Aguiñaga, assistant professors in the College of Professional and Graduate Studies at Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU), were recently named 2022 DaVinci Fellows by the DaVinci Institute.

The DaVinci Fellowship Award recognizes higher education faculty whose creative projects reflect a high degree of innovation and creativity.

Oliver and Aguiñaga are being recognized for their collaborative research and professional development project, *Stronger Professionals Every Day: A SWOSU Professional Learning Community for Alternately and Emergency Certified Teachers*. The goal for the project is to support the development and retention of the increasing number of alternatively certified and emergency certified teachers in the state of Oklahoma by providing effective, research-based professional development.

The DaVinci Institute's mission is to promote a statewide creativity renaissance through lectures, workshops, professional development, research and advocacy. The DaVinci Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to nurturing the Arts, Sciences, Humanities and Education in Oklahoma.

"Dr. Oliver and Dr. Aguiñaga are recognized as wonderful team members within the Department of Education by their colleagues and administration at SWOSU," said

SWOSU Department of Education Chair Ed Klein. "Perhaps more importantly, they serve as mentors and are part of a strong support structure for education majors. Both absolutely lead with the heart of a teacher."

Oliver began her career at SWOSU in 2013 and currently serves as the Reading Specialist Program director and literacy education assistant professor in the Department of Education. She also sponsors the local chapter for Kappa Delta Pi at SWOSU, serves as editor of the Journal of Young Adult and Children's Literature, provides professional development within the Yukon Public School district, and is president of the Oklahoma Higher Education Reading Council.

Aguiñaga also began her career at SWOSU in 2013. She is an assistant professor of teacher education and currently serves as the accreditation assessment coordinator in the Department of Education. Additionally, she sponsors two campus organizations—the Hispanic American Leadership Organization and the Oklahoma Aspiring Educators Association—and serves as the research editor for SWOSU's Administrative Issues Journal Editorial Board.

The DaVinci Award Ceremony will be held on Friday, March 25, at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. At that time, they will be presented with their DaVinci Vitruvian Man medallions and their cash award of \$1,000 to help support their continued project.

For more information about the DaVinci Institute, visit www.davinciok.org.