

SWOSU Awarded Grant for Single Moms' Network

04.28.2016

The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma, in their effort to create economic self-sufficiency for Oklahoma women and girls, has awarded a \$3,500 grant to Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford to establish a SWOSU Single Moms' Network.

The purpose of the program at SWOSU is to provide a network of support services designed to empower single moms to complete degrees. Director of the network is Dr. Amanda Evert, assistant professor in the Everett Dobson School of Business & Technology.

"Earning a college degree leads to increased earning power and success for anyone," said Dr. Patsy Parker, the school's associate dean. "Empowering single moms to complete college, however, affects entire families. The Single Moms' Network grant is an important initiative that will serve both western Oklahoma and the SWOSU community well."

Research states that in the 2011-2012 academic year, U. S. colleges and universities enrolled 3.5 million students who are also single parents, a group that represents 15.2% of the undergraduate population. Oklahoma currently has over 32,000 who are single parents with the majority headed by single mothers, and of these only 10% earn their degrees in a timely fashion.

"Having grown up in a single parent home, I know it is especially hard on everyone involved," said College of Professional and Graduate Studies Dean Dr. Ken Rose. "Had my mother not had a college degree, my mother, sister, and I would have been in a terrible situation."

Evert will identify four exceptional SWOSU individuals to serve as program coordinators and club advisors. These individuals will have both a passion for supporting single moms and a desire to lay the foundation for the program that will extend beyond 2016-2017 grant funding.

"This is the third grant I have co-authored for SWOSU," Evert said. "It is great to be part of a team that encourages and supports innovation. It is clear that SWOSU is a student-focused institution with a mission to bring exceptional opportunities to western Oklahoma."

The funds from the Oklahoma Women's Foundation will be used for speakers, professional development activities, fellowship events and emergency support. Luncheons will also be scheduled with SWOSU single mom mentors. After the first year, the program club advisors plan to submit official paperwork to make the SWOSU Single Moms' Network a recognized university club. The club will then have the option of applying for student activity funds to support mentor luncheons, resource fair, focus groups and networking events.