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SWOSU Students Win Reach Higher Program Awards



Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) students (left) Rhiannon Calfy of Temple, (third from left) Jennifer Nightengale of Foss and Abigail Ulery of Yukon were recently honored with Reach Higher awards at the Everett Dobson School of Business and Technology spring awards ceremony on the Weatherford campus. With them is Dr. Todd Wiggen, coordinator of SWOSU's organizational leadership program—Reach Higher Flex Finish.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) students Jennifer Nightengale of Foss, Abigail Ulery of Yukon and Rhiannon Calfy of Temple were recently honored with Reach Higher awards at the Everett Dobson School of Business and Technology spring awards ceremony on the Weatherford campus.

Nightengale and Ulery each received a \$1,000 Reach Higher scholarship from the SWOSU Foundation, Inc. Calfy was named the outstanding student in the Reach Higher program.

Reach Higher is a degree-finishing program designed for adults that have successfully completed some college coursework but have not yet finished a college degree. The program of study results in a Bachelor of Science degree in organizational leadership with an area of focus in general business.

"The Reach Higher program is the best option for me and my family. I love that it has the flexibility of completing my schoolwork as I can while also maintaining my full-time job," Nightengale said. "If this program were not available, I would not be able to complete this goal. I am thankful for the opportunity to complete this program all online."

Nightengale said that completing her degree sets a positive example for her children.

"I believe that the benefits from the Reach Higher program and from getting a college education will lead me and my family to a better future," Nightengale said.

Ulery has overcome some challenging life experiences and sees the Reach Higher program as a path to overcome those struggles while financially supporting her family.

"What the Reach Higher program means to me is flexibility," Ulery said. "I can complete my work after I get off from my job."

Ulery is considering continuing her education and pursuing a career in the mental health industry.

Calfy, a previous scholarship winner, completed her degree in organizational leadership this spring.

"The Reach Higher program has meant the world to me," Calfy said. "I stumbled upon information about the Reach Higher program and immediately reached out to Dr. Wiggen (Todd) and started the process to be a part of the program. Dr. Wiggen has become my mentor and role model. The program has been my saving grace and inspiration on my darkest days."

Calfy has been admitted to the Master of Science in management program at SWOSU and will continue her studies this fall. Eventually, she would like to work in the nonprofit sector and perhaps start her own nonprofit organization to assist families with children who have serious illnesses.

Dr. Todd Wiggen, the coordinator of SWOSU's organizational leadership program—Reach Higher Flex Finish—said the Reach Higher adult-friendly degree completion options through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education encourage adults who have earned some college credit to successfully complete their degrees.

"The program is really geared to working adults by offering flexible enrollment and online coursework. Students can go as fast or as slow as they want and are able," Wiggen said. "Many of our students may only take a class or two a semester due to their other obligations, and others will take five to six courses to try and finish as rapidly as possible. It is truly up to the individual."

The program is also examining other area of focus options aside from business to provide even greater flexibility.

The Reach Higher/Organizational Leadership program is currently accepting students for the 2022 fall semester at SWOSU. Additional information is available by contacting Wiggen at todd.wiggen@swosu.edu or at leadership@swosu.edu.