



News

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Two SWOSU Bulldog Students Serving Around the Nation



Michaela Pense

One Southwestern Oklahoma State University student in Weatherford is on the East Coast and one has been on the West Coast—both doing different but wonderful work.

- Michaela Pense of Antlers is a freshman who spent two weeks on the SWOSU campus before being called by the Air Force National Guard to head to New Jersey to help with medical processing of Afghans in crisis.
- Ambrosio (goes by Al) Aldrich of Indonesia (but went to high school at Corn Bible Academy) has been out west fighting the raging fires that have been ravaging many areas. He has spent time in Colorado and Washington.

Pense will possibly be back at the end of September where she will continue her pre-pharmacy studies at SWOSU. She said that she just started working with the Afghans and is enjoying seeing the children, who she describes as “so sweet.” She helps out in any way possible and usually works 12-hour shifts.

Her advice to other students who might be interested in the National Guard?

“If you have any thought about doing it, go for it,” Pense said. “I haven’t had any regrets.”

Pense, the daughter of Mike and Nina Pense of Antlers, enlisted in March 2020 and got back from basic military training and tech school in April 2021. She then came to SWOSU this fall semester.

SWOSU currently has a Guard Officer Leadership Development (GOLD) program, which is a leadership program available to Oklahoma Army National Guard (OKARNG) soldiers who attend SWOSU. This program was instituted in order to develop future federally commissioned officers for the OKARNG.



Ambrosio (Al) Aldrich

Aldrich, who is a senior at SWOSU majoring in wildland fire management, is excited on what he has been doing out west. His trips to Colorado and Washington will long be remembered. He was scheduled to go to California later this month but has had to cancel because of school work in order to graduate in May 2022.

He moved to Corn from Indonesia at the age of 14 to attend Corn Bible Academy. He then came to SWOSU and loves the field of wildland fire management.

"I want to help the locals with their homes and farms that are in danger," Aldrich said. "My goal on these trips is to help protect their belongings."

It is dangerous work but something he enjoys. He has not personally witnessed any deaths because of the fires but he did learn about the death of one firefighter at a morning briefing.

Aldrich said the trips have taught him the importance of communication and leadership skills, being flexible and also being positive in dealing with everything.

"Firefighting is not an easy thing to do, and it's hard to be away for a long period of time," Aldrich said. "But, on the other hand, if you like to travel and meet new people, it's a great opportunity. It's not about the money; it's about helping people."

SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell said both students are doing a great job representing SWOSU, and the university sincerely appreciates their efforts as well as other students doing similar assignments.

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