

## News

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# SWOSU Trio Earns Reach Higher Scholarships



Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) students (from left) Marisha McDaniel of Crawford, Tryston Morgan of Oklahoma City and Rhonda Bennet of Anadarko each have received a \$1,000 Reach Higher scholarship from the SWOSU Foundation, Inc., on the Weatherford campus. 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. With the trio is SWOSU's Reach Higher Flex Finish Coordinator Dr. Todd Wiggen.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) students Rhonda Bennet of Anadarko, Marisha McDaniel of Crawford and Tryston Morgan of Oklahoma City each have received a \$1,000 Reach Higher scholarship from the SWOSU Foundation, Inc., on the Weatherford campus.

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 has been such a blessing for me to reach my goal of graduating college," McDaniel said. "Having a college degree has been a goal that I set for myself years ago, and I never felt I would be able to complete that goal. This program has helped me to become more confident in myself and has given me the motivation to be able to complete my degree."

McDaniel said that her long-term goal was to become a certified high school teacher.

"The Reach Higher program is allowing me to work full-time while working towards a bachelor's degree that will help me progress in my current company and open up other opportunities in the future," Morgan said. "I have had nothing but positive experiences with all the professors teaching the courses in this program. Without this program, I may not have been able to finish my degree."

Morgan believes that his success in completing this degree will inspire his brothers to attend college. Following graduation, Morgan plans to move into the field of project management.

Bennett echoed Morgan's sentiments about inspiring family members.

"I am completing my degree for the satisfaction of knowing I finished what I started. I also want to set an example for my daughters," Bennett said. "As a working adult, wife, mom, grandma and wearer of many hats, it was a difficult decision to return to school. Dr. Wiggen (Todd) reached out with a letter of support through the Reach Higher program, which was just the encouragement that I needed. A person can feel insecure in returning. Dr. Wiggen was encouraging and reassuring."

Bennett is hoping to open a new business that will provide a positive, encouraging workplace for people in the community.

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 options. Students can go as fast or as slow as they want and are able," Wiggen said. "I have students who only take a class or two a semester due to their other obligations, and others that will take five to six classes to finish as rapidly as possible. It is truly up to the individual to set a pace they are comfortable with."

The Reach Higher/Organizational Leadership program is currently enrolling for the 2022 spring semester at SWOSU. Additional information is available by contacting Wiggen at [todd.wiggen@swosu.edu](mailto:todd.wiggen@swosu.edu) or at [leadership@swosu.edu](mailto:leadership@swosu.edu).