

GOLD Program Established at SWOSU by Oklahoma Army National Guard

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Major General Bud Wyatt (left), adjutant general for the state of Oklahoma, and SWOSU President John Hays recently signed an agreement to establish a Guard Officer Leadership Development (GOLD) program on the SWOSU campus in Weatherford.

Witnessing the signing of the Guard Officer Leadership Development (GOLD) program agreement between SWOSU and the Oklahoma Army National Guard are (from left): MAJ. Keith Varner, COL. Sonny Hurtado, SFC Rick Owens, CPT Kale Rogers and SWOSU Provost Blake Sonobe.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Army National Guard have teamed up to establish a Guard Officer Leadership Development (GOLD) program on the SWOSU campus in Weatherford.

The purpose of the program is to develop future officers, who will be federal-recognized commission officers. The program will kick off during the upcoming 2008 spring semester that begins January 10.

Major General Bud Wyatt, adjutant general for the state of Oklahoma, and SWOSU President John Hays recently signed an agreement to begin the program.

“We think that some of the core values of the Guard—such as integrity, community service, leadership and service above self—will further enrich the academic experience of SWOSU students,” Wyatt said. “We are excited to participate in a program that not only develops young leaders for the National Guard, but young leaders for this state and nation.”

Captain Kale Rogers said the GOLD program will be a minimum of three semesters with very few weekend drills. There are three phases of the program. Phase one is officer candidate school in Salina, Kan., for a two-week period of the summer. Phase two will be done during the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters, all done in a non-drill status on the SWOSU campus. Phase three will include a two-week stay in Fort Lewis, Washington.

After completing the program, students will become Second Lieutenants.

“We are very excited to have this program on our campus,” Hays said. “It’s a great opportunity for men and women to get involved in a leadership program that will benefit the students, Oklahoma Army National Guard and the entire nation.”

The SWOSU program will be run by Rogers, Sergeant First Class Rick Owens and contractor Master Sergeant (Retired) Kenneth Nunemaker. The GOLD program will be located in Room 310 of the Stafford Center. The trio will work with SWOSU Provost Blake Sonobe.

“Finding highly qualified individuals to lead the National Guard is extremely important for the accomplishment of its mission, whether it’s assisting in local emergencies or actively involved in combat,” Sonobe said. “SWOSU is blessed to have many students with the character, integrity and abilities necessary to become good leaders in the future.”

To meet admission requirements, students must have a minimum of 60 semester hours before phase one. For other qualifications, contact Captain Rogers at 580.330-0055.