

# **P**anhandle

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Promise Keepers



/ C A M P U S /

# OKLAHOMA REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES ARE **LADDERS TO SUCCESS**

*Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications*

**In a recent study by the Brookings Institution,** Oklahoma Panhandle State University was labeled a “ladder to success” in regard to social mobility. In fact, public regional universities in Oklahoma are outperforming the national average of upward social mobility by 38 percent, according to two national studies.

University President Dr. Tim Faltyn contributes Panhandle State’s success in part to the family-like community found on campus.

“We are successful because we surround our students with people who care just as much about their successes as they do. We help people fulfill the promise of their potential.”

Researcher Raj Chetty tracked 30 million students, from freshman year to around age 32, in an effort to discover the impact colleges have on the economic fortunes of students from the lowest income level. A perfect mobility rate from the lowest income level to the top is considered 4 percent while the average mobility rate in the United States is 1.7 percent. Panhandle State makes its mark above the national average at 2.53 percent.

From Chetty’s data, the Brookings Institution evaluated the upward social mobility of 342 four-year universities in a study called “Ladders, labs, laggards? Which universities contribute most.” The study notes, “universities act as ladders for social mobility, which makes for a more dynamic and fairer society. They are also laboratories for research, expanding our knowledge in directions that can improve the welfare of the broader population.” Institutions that cannot claim to boost mobility or create knowledge are labeled as “laggards.”

A nine percent increase in total enrollment for the fall semester leading to record-high freshman enrollment numbers for the second year in a row coupled with a record-high number of degrees awarded at the 2018 commencement ceremony show it is working, giving Panhandle State the opportunity to continue impacting students lives as well as the entire region.

“We strive to be a university that is always progressing forward. I believe Oklahoma Panhandle State University

*“We are successful because we surround our students with people who care just as much about their successes as they do. We help people fulfill the promise of their potential.”*

— Dr. Tim Faltyn,  
University President

is one of the best environments in America for students to receive a degree while obtaining life-learning skills,” Faltyn added. **P**

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On the cover: January 16, 2019 marked a special day in the history of Oklahoma Panhandle State University as the Panhandle Promise Scholarship received a million dollar donation.



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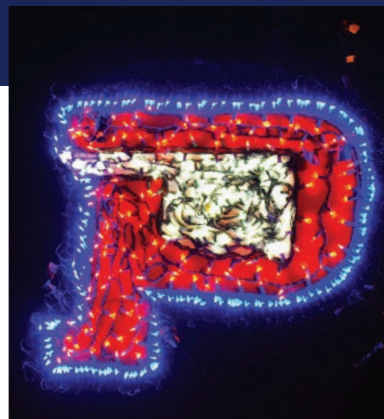
Hannah Haase — Rylee Higgins — Dakota Johnson — Sam Ortiz

/CAMPUS/

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Winter 2018







/ STAFF /

## MIKE LAMAR

**Grounds Supervisor Mike Lamar** and his crew take great pride in keeping the Panhandle State campus looking its finest.

Lamar oversees the care of all the exterior of campus and his daily duties vary depending on the time of year. From mowing and tree trimming to snow removal, Lamar enjoys it all. Additional responsibilities included caring for the ball fields and flower beds as well as all watering and fertilizing across campus. This year marked the second year for the Aggie Wonderland Christmas light show, a project that Lamar has a huge part in putting lights up and taking them down. With a grin, Lamar also adds “campus critter care” to his list of responsibilities as he enjoys keeping an eye on the owls that make their home in the trees outside of Sewell-Loofbourrow from season to season.

Lamar commented on the job, “I love all the people I work with and my favorite thing about the job would be all the friendly people. I also enjoy that the responsibilities are always changing and not the same thing every day.”

His face lights up as he thinks back on all the campus improvements he has seen and been a part of over the years. Some of his favorite projects include the recent walking trail and football turf project.

Physical Plant Director Laura Duran said, “Mike is probably one of the most happy-go-lucky people I know, always with a smile on his face. No matter the job that needs done, his positive attitude never changes!”

Born and raised in Guymon, Okla., Lamar graduated from high school in Texhoma, Okla. With his dad working on campus in the maintenance department and his brother already attending Panhandle State, it just seemed natural for Lamar to follow in their footsteps.

He began working at the school farm in 1998, as a student, bringing the current total of his years of service to over 20.

Lamar greatly enjoyed his time as a student noting the small environment as one of his favorite things about the University. He earned a bachelor’s degree in Agribusiness with a minor in Animal Science Production as well as a bachelor’s degree in Agronomy with a minor in Criminal Justice.

His current position makes it obvious that Lamar loves being outdoors, so it is no surprise that hunting and fishing are some of his favorite hobbies. Family time is also at the top of his list of favorites, especially spoiling his niece and nephew. Lamar has served as a volunteer firefighter for the Guymon Fire Department for 17 years and is a member of the Honor Guard. He also loves Aggie Athletics and it’s very common to see him cheering for the Aggies at any and all of the sporting events. **P**

/ STUDENT /

## RYLEE HIGGINS

**A natural choice**, Panhandle State was the perfect fit for Rylee Higgins after graduating from Texhoma High School in 2016.

“Many great things brought me to Panhandle State. One main reason, I had a great opportunity to play golf for the Lady Aggie golf team. It’s hard to pass up a golf scholarship. Other reasons that brought me to Panhandle State was being a small campus, close to home. I really enjoy the small class sizes and the one-on-one connection with the professors. The faculty is great and they are all willing to help in any way!”

Higgins is an Elementary Education major and plans to graduate in 2020. She is minoring in Health and Physical Education.

Future goals definitely include becoming a teacher. “I have grown up around teachers my whole life, and I plan to influence students the way my parents and teachers influenced me.”

Her favorite thing about Panhandle State “would be all the close friendships. The golf team has brought me some of the greatest friends.”

Head Golf Coach Dewayne Mauldin commented, “I have coached Rylee going on three years now and she has been a great asset to the team. Rylee is the team Captain, a good teammate, and a joy to be around. Rylee has a great head on her shoulders and she will have success after college. She is the type of person that will make people around her better because of her work ethic and personality.”

Free time isn’t really part of her vocabulary or day! She is currently employed as a campus photographer and can be seen at events all across campus while she primarily focuses on sports photos. Additionally, she serves as the Communication Officer for the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) on campus. She participates in activities at both the Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) and the Methodist Student Center (MSC). On top of all of that, Higgins works two additional jobs off campus. She is the Assistant Cheerleading Coach at the Junior High and High School in Texhoma and she works at a boutique called Crystal Boot.

Higgins considers her hobbies much of what keeps her busy each day. She loves to play golf and says with a grin “for the most part, it is such a relaxing sport.” She also loves to take photos, especially sport and action shots. Both her parents teach at Texhoma Public Schools and her sister, Reagan, graduated from Panhandle State and teaches English in Colorado. Higgins lives off campus with her two cats, Mike and Mark. **P**



/ FACULTY /

## MICHAEL BOZEMAN

**After 30 years with the Houston Police Department (HPD),** Michael Bozeman is serving as the Assistant Professor and Director of Criminal Justice teaching criminal justice courses. He also manages the program's adjunct faculty as well as course scheduling and budgeting.

He said, "I find the students to be inquisitive and really, I think, they are yearning for so much knowledge that I think I can share with them outside of just text books."

He has a number of goals for the program's future. "I have already submitted a substantial number of course changes as well as new changes in trying to bring our program up to the standards of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS). I would also like to bring the criminal justice students the facilities that they need including a crime scene house, interview and interrogation rooms, and a crime lab."

Immediately after earning a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, Bozeman accepted an offer from the HPD. He worked for four years before receiving a full academic scholarship toward his master's degree. He worked during the day and attended classes at night to obtain a master's in Criminal Justice Management.

During his 30 years at the HPD, Bozeman worked patrol, undercover narcotics and vice, served as the Assistant to Chief of Police, and worked criminal intelligence division on deep cover assignments. Additionally, he was attached to the FBI for five years on La Cosa Nostra. Bozeman was attached to the U.S. Secret Service and protected President George H. Bush during his presidency. About seven years of his career were spent in the homicide division. While investigating a mass murder in 2003, he was in a gun battle that resulted in a life-threatening injury. Six months and 27 surgeries later, he was back to work. A year and half later he was offered medical retirement which allowed him to pursue and earn a doctorate in Criminal Justice Administration.

After earning his doctorate, Bozeman received an invitation to work on a project at New Scotland Yard in London where he was introduced to British Intelligence Agencies. He then accepted a position as an instructor at Colorado Mesa University followed by teaching positions at the University of Texas and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. Bozeman was recruited to the Middle East where he trained United States and Allied Forces in intelligence and led training in Israeli Antiterrorism in Israel.

"Ever since I was a sophomore in high school I knew exactly what I wanted to do and I have pursued it ever since."

On a personal note, Bozeman has one daughter that teaches school in Colorado. He is an adventurer and world traveler who enjoys yachting and writing. Currently, he is working on his second book with the first published in 2014. **P**

/ ALUMNI /

## CODY KENDALL

**Cody Kendall can now add a world championship title** to his list of accomplishments after he and his team from Beachner Brothers Livestock won the 23rd Annual World Championship Ranch Rodeo (WCRR) in Amarillo, Texas this past November.

Kendall commented, "I have dreamed about doing this since I was a little kid. I am so thankful. The first time I went and watched (the WCRR) I was probably nine or so and it has been my goal to win since then."

In addition to earning the championship title, Beachner Brothers Livestock won the team penning and wild cow milking events at the WCRR.

Beachner Brothers Livestock was established in southeast Kansas in 1960 by Corky, Jerry, Bob and Bill Beachner. Kendall's dad, Calvin, who now manages the ranch's cow-calf operation, has worked for them since he was in high school. Kendall's brother Caden and his friend, Ty, who Kendall said is like a brother, joined Kendall and his dad to round out the team.

"My dad has competed here a lot and to be able to do this with him and be a big part of it, that's really special."

Each qualifying team competes in five different events including branding, stray gathering, team penning, wild cow milking, and ranch bronc riding. The teams are scored on a point system for each event and the team with the most points is crowned the winner.

Among his winnings, Kendall collected WCRR Horse and Top American Quarter Horse titles for the horse he was riding, Little Tee J Paul. He rode this same horse when competing in the team roping during college and has owned him since Little Tee J Paul was young.

Originally from Saint Paul, Kan., Kendall found his way to Goodwell on a rodeo scholarship after he attended junior college at Fort Scott Community College in Kansas. Kendall graduated from Panhandle State in May of 2018 with a Bachelor's degree in Animal Science.

Kendall competed in both the team roping and the saddle bronc riding for the Panhandle State rodeo team and he believes being around Coach Robert Etbauer and the whole team really helped him.

"I would like to thank Robert. He was one of the first to call me after we won and that meant a lot. He was really good to me during my time at Panhandle State."

Etbauer commented, "Cody was a good student and a great asset to the rodeo team in and out and the arena. He is a great hand with horses and we are glad to see him continue to do what he enjoys."

Future plans for Kendall include continuing to grow his personal cow herd and eventually run a cow/calf operation of his own, but for now, "I'm happy I get to go to work and saddle a horse every day." **P**



Local students enjoy the new “Read with a Therapy Dog” program at McKee Library.

/ EDUCATION /

## COMMUNITY ENJOYS READ WITH A THERAPY DOG PROGRAM

Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications

The new program, “Read with a Therapy Dog,” has kicked off at the McKee Library on the Oklahoma Panhandle State University campus.

There are three dogs that visit the children at the library. The dogs are named Reydon, Cheyenne, and Prissy and are certified Therapy Dogs through Therapy Dogs International (TDI). The dogs went through extensive six-week obedience training to receive the Good Canine Citizen certification. They continued on with a six-week training in Therapy work. The dogs had to pass a national certification test before being certified as a TDI Therapy Dog. Each year the dogs must have a wellness check and updated vaccinations to be re-certified. The dogs are insured through the TDI organization as well.

Reydon, Cheyenne, and Prissy have worked with children in reading programs over the past eight years. Reydon read with the same student for two years in his elementary school. To the readers, the dogs do not judge; just listen. The dog handler sits during the session, but does not interfere. If asked, they will assist with a word, but the program is for the child to be comfortable in reading out

loud without interference.

The dogs’ handler is Dr. Sandol Johnson, Chair of the Animal Science Department at Panhandle State.

She has over 30 years of experience working and training dogs in various activities.

Dr. Johnson remarked, “I like the TDI certification because the dogs are exposed to all types of activities that they may encounter as a therapy dog. This may include work with disabled individuals, nursing home residents, comforting disaster victims, hospitals, and support to college students. The training is intense for the dog, but I knew my dogs would be ready for many different environments”. **P**



*To the readers, the dogs  
do not judge; just listen.*





Kimberly Hays presents Kincannon (left) with the Award of Judicial Excellence.

/ EDUCATION /

## ALUMNUS RECEIVES JUDICIAL AWARD

Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications

**District Judge and Panhandle State Alumnus Ronald L. Kincannon** was presented with the Award of Judicial Excellence during the Oklahoma Bar Association's 114th Annual Meeting on November 7th through the 9th. He was one of 22 recipients of various awards that were given during the weekend.

Kincannon is a Panhandle native. He graduated from Griggs High School in Cimarron County and attended Panhandle State to receive his undergraduate degree in 1970, then went on to serve in the Army as a military intelligence officer. Following his service, he attended Oklahoma City University School of Law to earn his J.D. He then practiced as a trial attorney for 10 years before he moved to Cimarron County to be elected as the associate district judge. He has been serving the Oklahoma Panhandle for 24 years.

In the early 1990s, Kincannon took on teaching at his Alma Mater as an adjunct business law professor for a few years.

The President of the Oklahoma Bar Association, Kimberly Hays, commented, "Judge Kincannon is being recognized for his contributions to the community and to the practice of law. He should be very proud of his accomplishments."

Today, Kincannon can be found assisting Texas County with criminal dockets, serving as a settlement judge, and continuing to receive assignments throughout the 1st Judicial District, which encompasses 180 miles of all three panhandle counties as

*"It is a blessing to the Panhandle area when alumni like Ron Kincannon return home and serve their Panhandle community."*

— Diane Murphey, Alumni President

well as Harper County.

President of the Panhandle State Association of Alumni and Friends Diane Murphey stated, "It is a blessing to the Panhandle area when alumni like Ron Kincannon return home and serve their Panhandle community. I am very proud of his accomplishments as well as the many volunteer activities that benefit this area." **P**



/ EDUCATION /

## GENEROUS DONATION GIVEN TO SUPPORT **PANHANDLE PROMISE**

*Submitted by April Coble, Guymon Daily Herald*

A **generous donation** has come forth to support education and homegrown teachers in the Oklahoma Panhandle under the flagship of Oklahoma Panhandle State University's new scholarship, Panhandle Promise. The scholarship hopes to get more students into a program to become educators with the promise to cover college tuition. In turn, those students promise to teach in panhandle schools, bringing trained and certified teachers to public school classrooms close to home.

A \$1 million boost to the program comes from a fund that had been set aside for scholarships and community work from the Bridenstine vs. Kaiser Francis lawsuit.

The suit was a class of royalty owners with minerals in the Oklahoma Panhandle who had been underpaid royalties as a result of affiliated transactions and improper deductions from their royalties beginning in 1983 by Kaiser-Francis Oil Company, Quester Oil & Gas Company, Union Pacific Oil & Gas Company and Chemical Bank. The total ultimate recovery for the class was approximated \$110 million.

In some cases, royalty owners could not be identified or found, leaving almost \$2 million left, according to recently retired Judge Ronald Kincannon.

"It was from the land that belonged to citizens of the panhandle, and what we're doing now is giving that remaining interest, which is called a side pre award, back into the hands to benefit the citizens of Beaver and Texas County, and all of

the Oklahoma Panhandle," Kincannon said. "I hope we'll have teachers that will remain in our local school districts. That will be a part of us, that will remain as a part of the solution, our education solution in the Oklahoma panhandle. It's hard for us to recruit teachers into this area, because we are part of the five state area, as you very well know... we're the only county in the nation (Cimarron)

*"An amazing citizen of the panhandle stepped up with an anonymous gift of half a million dollars, and Panhandle Promise was born. ."*

— Dr. Tim Faltyn, University President

that touches four other states. Five, if you count Oklahoma. We Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas and Texas. We're competing with all of those states for our teachers that we get into our local school system."

A portion of the proceeds go toward other funds, with \$1 million going into an endowment at Panhandle State for future educators.

Panhandle State President Dr. Tim Faltyn called the presentation of the funds one of the greatest things to happen in his 30 months here. He noted the process started in July 2017, following a speaking engagement with the Oklahoma State School Board Association (OSSBA). It was the first time he met local rancher and businessman Mike Ray.

"Mike is a member of the Guymon public school board. He came up to me afterwards," Faltyn recalled, "he goes, 'Hey. You want to impress me? Figure out a way to get teachers to stay in the panhandle.' That was the first thing he said to me."

Faltyn said he returned home, thinking about what was said, and decided Ray was right, and called him back. After several in person and phone conversations, he came up with an idea, planting the first seeds of the Panhandle Promise.

"With Mike's idea, I worked with Dr. Dinger and Dr. Blanton, who are two superstars in Oklahoma education on how we can put this together where we create an incentive program for teachers," Faltyn continued.

He credited Dr. Dinger with putting the program together and working out how it will work, and Dr. Blanton with putting it in a way that everyone can understand. Then it was time to pitch the program and seek out donors. One came along quickly with the first funding.

"An amazing citizen of the panhandle stepped up with an anonymous gift of half a million dollars, and Panhandle Promise was born. (The donor is) completely committed to our way of life... committed to making sure that this way of life doesn't die with their generation or their kids' generations," Faltyn said.

Following the first generous donation, Faltyn approached the Panhandle Foundation, which is dedicated to remaining separate from the college and ensuring scholarships are available to students. Credit was given to Dr. Doris Looper, who spent 30 years as a faculty member of Panhandle State and 18 years with the foundation. She is now the director at the foundation.

"This was right in her lane in terms of, okay you're going to do a scholarship, we can do that. So it was really her that helped us put the deal together," Faltyn stated. "The Panhandle Foundation matched the initial gift of \$500,000. So we had a million dollars in the account."

The Panhandle Promise is for those hoping to become teachers and plan to



Above: Mike Ray accepts a Resolution of Appreciation from the Board of Regents during the Panhandle Promise Scholarship check presentation. Left: Gabrielle Ramos interviews with Amarillo News Channel 10 during the check presentation.

graduate from Panhandle State. Students must be willing to sign a commitment to teach at a public school in the three counties of the Oklahoma panhandle for two years after graduation. Once that obligation is met, the scholarship covers the cost of tuition. However, Faltyn noted, this is a gap scholarship.

“What we’re going to do is we’re going to ask students to come in, they have to apply for federal financial aid. They have to apply for a private scholarship. Whatever is left over in the gap, this scholarship will cover so that it’s free for the students,” Faltyn said.

While the tuition will be covered, Faltyn believes this isn’t a world of getting something for nothing. Students will have to cover some costs.

“We had this great internal debate about whether we should cover the books. I guess I’m the one who settled the debate,” Faltyn said. “We want people who are committed to this in a relationship of something for something. So the students will be responsible for covering their books.”

The story behind the donation is a story of talking to the right people at the right time, and shows how closely knit together the people of the panhandle really are.

“One of my board members... he called and he says, ‘I think I’ve got something that will be good for you.’” Faltyn stated.

From there, he was asked to discuss the university’s programs and initiatives. He talked about Panhandle Promise, and says he was told he didn’t need to go any further. The board member directed Faltyn to Judge Kincannon, who would be in charge of making a decision about

\$2 million in settlement money in need of an appropriate place to reside.

“All we’re going to do is change lives for the rest of our lives,” Faltyn declared. “I learned through a TV interview recently that some of these owners were owed back to the ‘30s. During that time, when this money was awarded, interest is gained, some people don’t make a claim, so forth. At the end of everybody gets paid in the class action lawsuit, there was... \$1.934 million, as I recall. It was completely Judge Kincannon’s decision as to where that money should go.”

The Panhandle Promise endowment funds at a total of \$2 million now remain in that endowment, with the interest paying for the scholarships to grow educators right here at home, with the hopes that the two year stay will keep many of them here.

“It’s actually the interest that pays this scholarship. So the Panhandle Promise will far outlive everybody here, even these two students,” Faltyn said, referring to two potential candidates for the program.

While they have not yet been officially chosen for the scholarship at this time, two students were at the presentation.

Nancy Melendez is a senior and a math education major with a minor in computer information systems, president of State Student Oklahoma Education, participates in SOEA, HALO, the programming team and SGA, is a teacher in the Panhandle’s Future after school program on campus, a graduate of Guymon High School and a first generation college student.

Freshman Gabrielle Ramos is an

elementary education major who participates in cross county and is a graduate of Guymon High School.

Dr. Dinger and Dr. Blanton, applying their expertise in sociology and anthropology, helped Dr. Faltyn come up with the two year teaching term, determining how long it would take for an individual to plant roots in the panhandle.

“They determined that anybody who stays in the community 17 months after they graduate from college stays on an average of seven years,” Faltyn said. “So that means some of them stay 40, some of them stay five... so we thought two years was a good number.”

“That two year commitment essentially locks people in, and we believe they’re going to do what my wife and I experienced. We’ve been here about 30 months. We love the community. We love the schools. We love the people,” Faltyn said.

He noted to those in attendance at the check presentation that he has worn out his first pair of panhandle boots - which is a sign of what is to come.

“Everybody says if you wear out a pair of shoes in the panhandle, you’ll stay forever,” Faltyn said.

Faltyn has an even greater positive outlook on Panhandle Promise than when the scholarship was first announced, thanks to a little extra push, dedicated residents of Texas County, and a judge with a vision of what will benefit the people in Texas, Beaver and Cimarron Counties.

“Judge Kincannon will make sure we have teachers in the panhandle as far as the eye can see,” Faltyn stated. **P**



Area high school students have the chance to jump start their college career in the Early College High School Program.

/ EDUCATION /

## INNOVATIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR PANHANDLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications

**With fall classes wrapping up and the anticipation of the holidays building,** December was a month full of excitement, and this December was certainly not any different. Not only did it bring the end of the fall semester, but also the conclusion of the first semester of the Early College High School Dual Credit Program (ECHS) at Oklahoma Panhandle State University.

Panhandle State Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Julie Dinger commented, "This pilot program is a great partnership between OPSU and our area high schools. We have always had great concurrent enrollment experiences for high school students, but now we can be truly innovative and provide a full collegiate experience, while still allowing time in their schedule to participate in an extracurricular activity. This ability to have a complete high school and college experience really sets us apart from other Early College programs."

In addition to the concurrent classes currently offered for high school students, ECHS gives Panhandle State the opportunity to give the right brand of students the chance to graduate from high school with a college degree. The program provides extremely cost effective advanced learning opportunities for high school students

from Goodwell, Okla.; Guymon, Okla.; and Hooker, Okla.

Beginning the sophomore year of high school, qualifying students will begin college coursework while still having a complete high school experience. Upon graduation, students attain an Associate of Science in General Studies with concentrations available in Education, STEM, and Business fields.


As a sophomore, students take classes at their respective high school campus. The next two years consist of both online courses and classes at the Panhandle State campus in Goodwell. Students in the program take classes in the fall and spring semesters as well as summer courses.

Qualification is granted upon scoring in the 50th percentile on the ACT and recommendation of the high school counselor.

Assistant Director of Admissions Karina Jauregui commented, "One of the best things we can do for our

community and the younger generations is give them an educational opportunity that was not previously available. These qualifying students have the chance to earn an Associate's degree while also earning their High School diploma, which will set them up for success. It is a challenging program that allows students to earn a degree that may have not been possible otherwise."

This fall saw 23 students enrolled in the program.

Dean of Business and Technology Davin Winger traveled to Hooker to teach a course on microeconomics two days a week. He commented, "It's been a blessing to get to know the Hooker High School students, and be with them on this Early College High School journey. It has been exciting to watch them grow. We were all a little nervous the first day of class. They worked hard all semester and gained confidence in themselves and their abilities. I'm proud of the work they have done, and the courage they have shown in taking advantage of this opportunity." 

*"We can be truly innovative and provide a full collegiate experience, while still allowing time in their schedule to participate in an extracurricular activity."*

— Dr. Julie Dinger, Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs



The Aggie Chamber Singers lit up the room during a special Christmas Gala performance.

/ EDUCATION /

## FIRST CHRISTMAS GALA WAS A **NIGHT OF ENCHANTMENT**

*Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications*

**On a chilly winter's evening**, the Panhandle State choir hosted its first annual Christmas Gala. December 1st marked a night filled with incredible dining and music in a winter wonderland setting.

Guests from all over the region made their way to Panhandle State's ballroom to be greeted by the choir members and confirm their registrations. Ticket sales were successful and the music programs were able to receive generous sponsorships as well. As the attendees made their way through the Christmas trees decorated with simple white lights, they posed for a photo op in a decked-out sleigh before taking their seats.

The lights were dim, but the ambiance was tantalizing. Christmas lights were strung from tree to tree, casting lights to the chandelier hanging from the ceiling. A grand piano flanked with risers for the singers was front and center, begging to be played and fill the ballroom with its magical notes. Low chatting and murmurs could be heard throughout, commenting on the beautiful centerpieces and décor, anxiously waiting the concert that was about to be experienced.

Soon after all were seated at their tables, the student choir broke into song, filling the air. This was only the first of many sets throughout the evening. The mixture

of Christmas and classical music was perfect for the theme of the Gala. Between sets, the choir members served the different courses for the meal, dressed in their tuxedos and long black gowns.

There was an overwhelming sense of impression throughout the ballroom and guests were often overheard expressing excitement and enjoyment. The music coupled with food created such an elegant evening. Multiple solos and small ensembles, including a harpist and trumpet player, were in the mix as well. For the finale, the entire choir joined together for their last set. Lovely music once again filled the atmosphere and finished with a standing ovation for the Panhandle State choir.

If you missed this year's Christmas Gala, there will be another one during the next holiday season! Get your tickets and sponsorships early as they sell fast. All proceeds go to supporting the Panhandle State choir. **P**



# PANHANDLE STATE GIVING CHALLENGE

/ ALUMNI /

## ALUMNI ANNOUNCE GIVING CHALLENGE

*Released by Panhandle State Campus  
Communications*

**During the season of giving**, the Oklahoma Panhandle State University Association of Alumni and Friends had the perfect opportunity to invest in the future during a 60-day fundraising campaign. The Panhandle State Giving Challenge started December 15, 2018 and runs through February 15, 2019.

University President Dr. Tim Faltyn said, "Not only does this challenge allow those that have been such a key part of our history to give back, but it is also a great chance for our Aggie family members to impact the future and come alongside our vision of helping students reach the promise of their potential."

The Giving Challenge is designed to raise awareness and funding for two important parts of the Alumni Association: the alumni scholarship and an alumni events fund. Donations will make it possible for the Alumni Association to reach the goal of hosting five alumni events across the region in 2019. Graduating classes are challenged to compete with each other, and the class totaling the most donations will win a reception of their choosing.

Vice President of Outreach Dr. Ryan Blanton added, "Donations will be used to fund future education through an alumni scholarship with additional funds making it possible for Alumni to connect at a number of upcoming alumni events."

Alumni Association Director Natasha Eidson is excited for the opportunities this campaign will bring with it, "I believe this fundraiser will be an exciting time for Alumni to reconnect with previous classmates. My hope is that it will challenge everyone to give back and also have fun while doing it. Any amount given is greatly appreciated.




There will be two classes to receive a reception, the class with the largest amount given and the class with the most donations given."

With a goal of \$10,000, the Alumni Office is proud to announce \$6,000 has already been donated.

A complete list of donor levels and benefits can be found at [giving.opsu.edu](http://giving.opsu.edu). Every donor will be put in a drawing for seats with President Faltyn at the 2019 Homecoming Football game and those giving over \$100 will receive a commemorative coin. Donations over \$10,000 qualify for seats with President Faltyn at the College National Finals Rodeo in June of 2019.

Alumni President Diane Murphey said, "I am excited for this opportunity that allows Alumni to work with the University, and the Foundation to continue the excellence that is Panhandle, as well as reconnect with friends and classmates."

Donations can be submitted online at [giving.opsu.edu](http://giving.opsu.edu) or mailed to Panhandle State:

Attn: Alumni Office, PO Box 430, Goodwell, OK, 73939. 



Thanks to a generous donation, the Alumni Office recently got an update.

/ALUMNI/

## FAHRENDORF PROVIDES GENEROUS DONATION TO ALUMNI OFFICE

*Released by Panhandle State Campus Communications*

**The Panhandle State Alumni Office** is looking gorgeous, thanks to Panhandle alumni and former Computer Information Systems faculty Pam Fahrendorf (class of 1982). She coordinated a donation of awesome furniture for the Panhandle Alumni Office!

In explaining her motivation for coordinating the donation, Pam said: "Panhandle State made a difference in my life. I needed to finish my education and Panhandle was an academically sound university as well as one that was safe for me and my children. In addition, I found a lifetime of friendships that I will treasure for the rest of my life. Dr. Tom Palmer, Mr. Vernon Hopson, Dr. Serafin Ramon, Dr. Kurt Schaefer, Dr. Russ Edenborough, Janice Vines and Diane Murphey all had my back when I was there, just to name a few... and bless their hearts. I believe in giving back to those who helped you when you were in need. It was the least I could do for the school that had given me so much. This was a gesture to pay it forward."

With the help of Mike Lamar and his crew, the furniture was unloaded, assembled, and placed in the Panhandle State Alumni Office. If you find yourself on campus, stop by for a cup of coffee and see the beautiful addition in 109 Hefley Hall.

Panhandle State Association of Alumni and Friends President Diane Murphey stated "Panhandle State is made stronger

by caring and giving alumni. We appreciate Pam Fahrendorf, her gift, and her faithful remembrance of Panhandle State."

In addition to this donation, Pam and her husband William have established an endowed Fahrendorf Scholarship for Computer Information System majors through the Panhandle State Foundation.

Natasha Eidson, the Director of Alumni Relations commented, "the generosity and warm welcoming I have seen from Alumni since I have arrived in September has been astounding. Panhandle State Alumni care about the University and the future of the Alumni Association. We are so very excited about the new furniture in the Alumni office."

The Alumni Association would like to encourage all alumni and friends to give back through this spring's Giving Challenge. **P**



Panhandle State Rodeo Alumni stayed consistent during the WNFR earning over \$384,000.

/ATHLETICS/

## CONSISTENCY PAYS FOR ALUMNI AT WNFR

*Submitted by Kashly Schweer*

The genetic improvement of the animal athletes in the roughstock events makes for high-point rides that the crowd craves, but it becomes more difficult for cowboys to cover all ten animals throughout the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (WNFR). This year was no exception. In the saddle bronc riding, only one cowboy made the eight-second whistle on every horse he placed his saddle on. The top cowboy in the bull riding rode seven of the ten bulls to be the aggregate champion.

The cowboys of Oklahoma Panhandle State University proved they can be consistent across the most grueling ten days of rodeo. Orin Larsen placed eighth in the bareback riding aggregate for an additional \$6,346.15. The Canadian cowboy made the whistle on nine of the ten head for a total combined score of 768 points. Larsen finished eighth in the world standings as well.

When faced with challenging broncs in the saddle bronc riding, Cort Scheer cashed-in with three go-round wins. He also placed fourth in the aggregate with a total of 688 points on eight head, adding \$31,730.77 to his 10-day winnings. Scheer climbed to sixth in the world standings with \$238,972.28 accumulated throughout both the regular season and the WNFR.

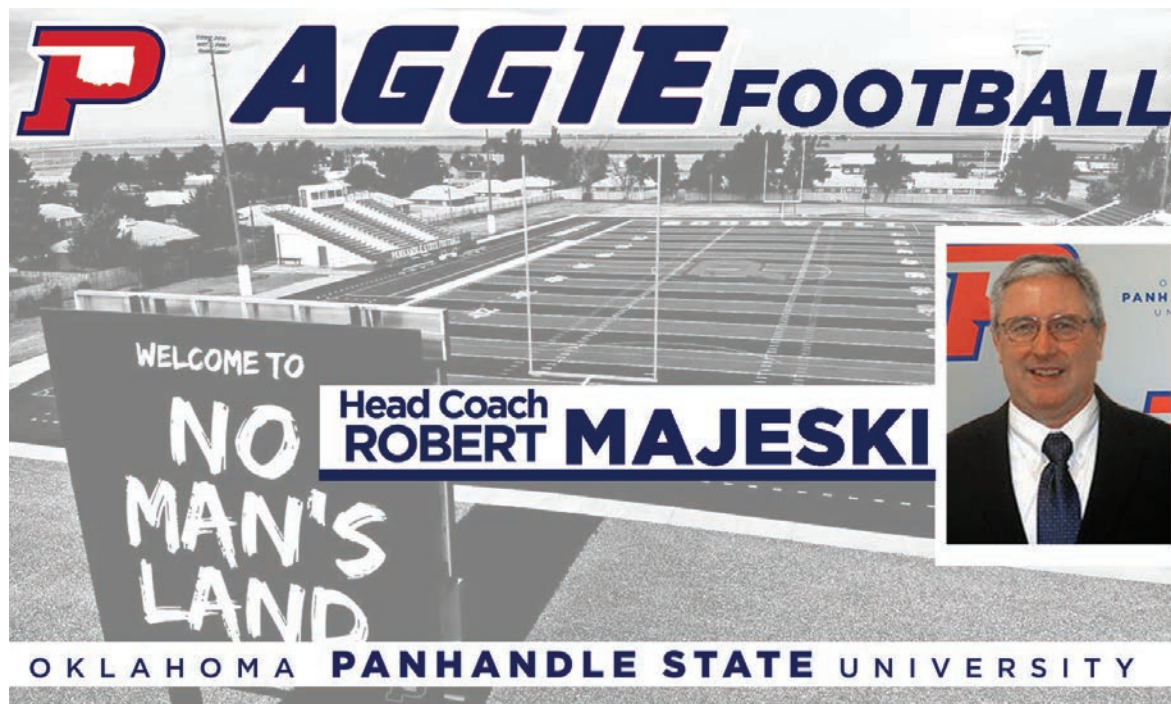
Clay Elliott added a little extra to the pockets of his Wrangler jeans by placing seventh in the saddle bronc riding average with 511.50 points on six head. He landed in tenth place in the world standings. Taos Muncy finished his year in fifteenth.



The biggest movement came in the bull riding. Joe Frost covered 50 percent of his bulls, scoring a combined 436.50 points. The Utah cowboy pocketed an extra \$54,576.92 for his second-place finish in the aggregate. He leaped into third place in the world standings after earning \$138,557.69 during the WNFR.

Just as these alumni prepare for the new year, the Panhandle State Rodeo Team will return from winter break with a full schedule including the annual Top Hand Auction in February before kicking off collegiate rodeo action at Kansas State University Feb. 15-17, 2019. **P**





/ATHLETICS/

## PANHANDLE STATE ANNOUNCES ROBERT MAJESKI AS HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

Released by Panhandle State Sports Information

**Robert (Bob) Majeski Jr. will take the helm as the next head coach of the Aggie Football program.** Following a national search, Oklahoma Panhandle State University Director of Athletics Meghan Mulcahy announced the decision Thursday, December 20, 2018.

University President Dr. Tim Faltyn commented, "We are extremely excited for the future of Aggie Football under the leadership of Coach Majeski. His experience and skill set are perfectly suited to match up with our vision for the success of the program on the field and in the classroom and community."

Mulcahy added, "The hiring committee and I are excited to have Coach Majeski joining us. I believe that he is the right fit for our football team, the athletic staff, the university, and the community. His energy and experience will be a great addition to our program, and I look forward to the next season."

Majeski has 34 years of coaching experience at the collegiate level with eight of those being as a head coach. Majeski comes to Panhandle State from Deland, Fla. and Stetson University.

Majeski previously served as the head coach at Dodge City Community College (DCCC) in Dodge City, Kan. and at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, S.D. In 2011, he was named the Kansas Jayhawk Conference Coach of the Year after leading DCCC to the conference playoffs. Prior to arriving at Dodge City, he served as the Defensive Coordinator at Coffeyville Community College in Coffeyville, Kan. where the defense was ranked number one in the conference in 2006.

Majeski consistently produced teams that rank in the top 10 in the nation and top three in their respective conference, having coached at seven other colleges and universities.

A graduate of the University of Nebraska-Omaha, Majeski earned a Bachelor of Science degree in General Studies and an emphasis in

*"We will produce student-athletes that will excel in the classroom and on the playing field. But, more importantly in our communities after having received a degree from OPSU."*

— Robert (Bob) Majeski Jr.,  
Head Football Coach

PE. Majeski played at Kansas State University as a wide receiver from 1980-1983.

Majeski feels Panhandle State and the town of Goodwell are great places to recruit to, in addition to providing student-athletes an outstanding atmosphere to obtain their academic and athletic goals.

He commented, "I would like to thank OPSU President Dr. Faltyn, Athletic Director Meghan Mulcahy and the selection committee for granting me the opportunity to join the OPSU Family as Head Football Coach. I believe that there is great leadership on campus, with a clear vision of what the OPSU football program should look like."

Majeski continued, "It is an honor and a privilege to be named Head Football Coach. We will produce student-athletes that will excel in the classroom and on the playing field. But, more importantly, in our communities after having received a degree from OPSU." **P**



/ATHLETICS/

## LEMIN AND SMITH NAMED DAKTRONICS NAIA FOOTBALL SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

*Released by Panhandle State Sports Information*

**The NAIA released the 2018 Daktronics NAIA Football Scholar-Athletes, with two Aggies making the grade.**

Offensive lineman Samuel Lemin and defensive lineman Sequoia Smith were among the 18 players listed from the Sooner Athletic Conference. Arizona Christian topped the charts with eight athletes making the roster; Lyon College and Texas Wesleyan each had three players, OPSU two and SAGU and Wayland Baptist had one apiece.

Lemin, a senior from Canberra, Australia finished his fourth year as a member of the Aggies' offensive unit and will graduate from Panhandle State with a degree in Accounting/Finance. He is an active member of the Phi Beta Lambda business club and was inducted in the 2018 class of the Chi Alpha Sigma National Athletic Honor Society.

As a key member of the Aggie defense, Smith came to Panhandle State from Boyd, Texas and played in 32 career games. Also a member of Chi Alpha Sigma, Smith will graduate early with a degree in Agribusiness and Animal Science.

To be eligible, athletes must have achieved at least a 3.5 cumulative grade point average and must have attended two full years at the institution.

Athletic Director Meghan Mulcahy offered comments on behalf of the football program, "I am extremely proud of these young men for their accomplishments. Their dedication in the classroom and on the field has become a great success."

A complete listing of this year's honorees is available online at [naia.org](http://naia.org). **P**

## AGGIE ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



/ATHLETICS/


### ACADEMIC ACCOLADES FOR AGGIE ATHLETE KENDRA BUTLER

*Released by Panhandle State Sports Information*

Panhandle State's Kendra Butler received both national and regional recognition for her stellar academic accomplishments. Butler was named to the 2018 Daktronics-NAIA Volleyball Scholar-Athlete list as well as the Sooner Athletic Conference Scholar-Athlete roster.

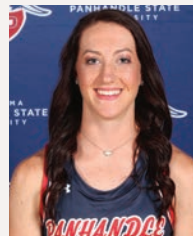
Just completing her junior season with the Aggie volleyball team, Butler hails from Conroe, Texas and is working towards a degree in Biology at OPSU. In order to be considered for scholar-athlete honors, students must maintain a minimum 3.5 grade point average and achieve a junior academic status at their institution.

Head Coach Signe Coombs commented, "We are very proud of Kendra [Butler] on being named an NAIA-Daktronics Scholar-Athlete and earning the SAC Scholar-Athlete award. Kendra embodies what it means to be a student-athlete. She has set a great example of how to excel in the classroom and on the court while also being a fantastic representative of our volleyball program and University."

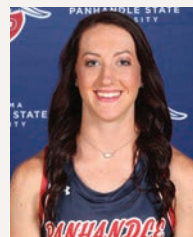
The complete listings of scholar-athletes is available online at [naia.org](http://naia.org) and [soonerathletic.org](http://soonerathletic.org). 



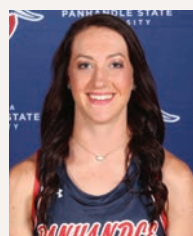
MONTY REGIER  
WEEKS 13: Basketball



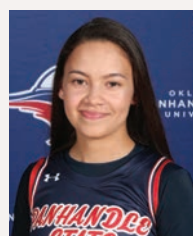
ADDISON MUNSCH  
WEEKS 14: Basketball



ADDISON MUNSCH  
WEEKS 15: Basketball



ADDISON MUNSCH  
WEEKS 16: Basketball



TAYLOR ACOSTA  
WEEK 17: Basketball



BREIMAN ALEXANDER  
WEEK 13: Basketball



BARIS ULKER  
WEEKS 14: Basketball



BREIMAN ALEXANDER  
WEEK 15: Basketball



JAEDON WHITFIELD  
WEEK 16: Basketball



KHALLID EDWARDS  
WEEK 17: Basketball

A complete listing of Athlete of the Week recipients can be found at [opsuaggies.com](http://opsuaggies.com)

OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY

Rodeo Team's

# 2019 Top Hand Auction

February 2, 2019 at 6 p.m.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Pickle Creek Event Center in Guymon, OK

Keeping the

WINNING

*Tradition Alive!*



COACH: ROBERT ETBAUER 620.655.3829

COACH: SHELBY WEEDE 719.691.1796

