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**EXCELLENCE IN
STUDENT SERVICES**

“I am honored to be selected to serve on the EAC for the state of Oklahoma, alongside many outstanding individuals. I am excited for the work we will be doing to develop programs to better higher education, especially in our region.”

— *Dr. Tim Faltyn,*
University President



/CAMPUS/

FALTYN TO SERVE ON THE OKLAHOMA NSF EPSCoR EXTERNAL ADVISOR COMMITTEE

Oklahoma Panhandle State University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn, has been selected to serve on the Oklahoma National Science Foundation Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) External Advisory Committee (EAC). Faltyn is one of 9 members selected to serve on the EAC made up of leaders from business, industry, and academia from 7 different states.

In the Summer of 2020, Oklahoma NSF EPSCoR launched a new five-year Research Infrastructure Improvement award titled Socially Sustainable Solutions for Water, Carbon, and Infrastructure Resilience in Oklahoma (S3OK). More than 30 researchers from across the state are working together on the \$20 million, multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional project.

President Faltyn stated, “I am honored to be selected to serve on the EAC for the state of Oklahoma, alongside many outstanding individuals. I am excited for the work we will be doing to develop programs to better higher education, especially in our region.”

The EPSCoR’s overarching goal is to increase the state’s research competitiveness through strategic support of research instruments and facilities, research collaborations, and integrated education and research programs. A statewide outreach and workforce development component is also supported through the award, which is funded by the National Science Foundation and Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

The committee’s role is to provide recommendations to increase the effectiveness and integration of all S3OK program elements during the five-year NSF award (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2025). The EAC will develop an annual program assessment to evaluate progress toward established milestones.

The EAC is scheduled to meet in early February for an introductory meeting, which will provide more details and insight into their roles and the program. **P**

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On the cover: Erin Moore, Director of Financial Aid



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PANHANDLE STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Dr. Tim Faltyn — President
Dr. Julie Dinger — Provost
Dr. Ryan Blanton — Vice President of Operations
Dr. Brad Duren — Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
Liz McMurphy — Assistant Vice President of Fiscal Affairs

PANHANDLE MAGAZINE

Natasha Eidson — Director of Campus Communications
Chyanna Black — Director of Alumni Relations
Dave Beyer — Sports Information Director

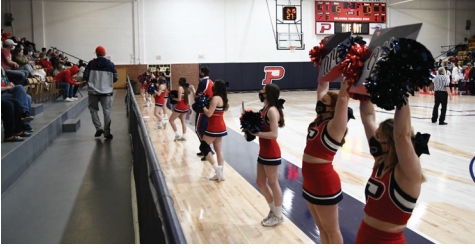
PHOTOGRAPHERS

Natasha Eidson — Chyanna Black — Amanda Tidwell — Brittany Smith — Laura Demures Moya — Myra Mccaskill — Camry Kane

/ATHLETICS/

ALL SPORTS TO PLAY IN SPRING SEMESTER







“Erin has always gone above and beyond to give our students the best experience. Her go-getter attitude and ambition are both qualities that have made her successful in this position. I know our students are thankful for the time she dedicates to them.”

— Dr. Tim Faltyn,
University President

/ STAFF /

DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AID, ERIN MOORE, DELIVERS EXCELLENT STUDENT SERVICE

For our students at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, financial aid is one of the first departments they visit. Erin Moore, originally from Biloxi, Mississippi, has served as the Director of Financial Aid since June 2019. Part of Erin’s role in student financial aid, aside from assisting students, is to ensure that the financial aid process complies with federal guidelines, packaging the student aid, disbursing, and notifying students according to federal guidance, among other duties. There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes in the financial aid process.

Provost, Dr. Julie Dinger stated, “Ms. Moore has built a solid reputation as an expert on campus and among her peers in Financial Aid for her work improving processes and ensuring compliance, but her excellence is not limited to her work on scholarships and aid distribution. Erin is a standout leader on campus, she is a mentor known for her wisdom, compassion, and open door to any student or colleague in need.”

The Director of Financial Aid assists with the Student Financial Aid Audit as well. This aid audit involves assisting auditors with any needed documentation and answering questions regarding all federal awards as they sample transactions for an aid year, such as Pell grants, Federal Direct Student Loans, and other Federal student aid programs.

Associate Vice President of Fiscal Affairs, Liz McMurphy, commented, “I’d like to commend Erin for a job well done. This past year has been challenging, and Erin managed to have the best financial aid audit results I’ve seen in my time here despite all of the challenges this year. She has managed to keep us in compliance in all areas under student financial aid, and her work speaks for itself.”

In addition to the regular load of federal student aid programs, Erin has taken on the student CARES grant funding. This involves processing the student applications and disbursement for qualifying students and the required reporting for the CARES grant funding.

Erin’s favorite part of her job is the personal satisfaction in knowing her efforts further student’s education. “I was a part-time student for nine years to complete my undergraduate degree, so I understand the time, effort, and commitment to completing a degree takes. My end goal every day is to ensure as a department, we are serving our students and meeting their needs for financial aid.”

“I count myself lucky to be surrounded by people at OPSU who are dedicated to the success of students. I am successful because of the administration, and my co-workers in staff and the excellent faculty members all contribute to help make me successful.”

“Don’t be afraid of financial aid,” Erin commented, “Many times, students hear the word financial, and they do a complete shutdown. We have worked hard to establish a culture of openness in financial aid. We welcome students, and we want them to come to us for help. This helps us understand how the student is thinking, and it helps us improve our communication and enhance our processes to better serve the student. It’s what we do best here. We’re passionate about the student experience to be positive when it comes to financial aid.” **P**

/ STAFF /

NATASHA EIDSON AWARDED NEXTGEN UNDER 30 FOR OKLAHOMA



Natasha Eidson, Director of Campus Communications, has been named a recipient for the 2020 NextGen Under 30 Leadership Award in the Adult and Higher Education division. The Oklahoma NextGen Under 30 program started in 2010 and has expanded throughout Oklahoma, receiving 7,000 nominees from over 400 different companies and organizations across Oklahoma. Eidson was recognized for her leadership at Oklahoma Panhandle State University.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "Natasha has become a respected leader on campus and continues to grow her skills and talents."

Eidson stated, "I am honored to have received this award, especially at the age of twenty-four. I have always tried to reach high, and I am thankful to have the best team helping me along the way."

Eidson celebrated two years with Oklahoma Panhandle State University in September of 2020. Her career at OPSU started in 2018 as the Director of Alumni Relations. When the Director of Campus Communications' position opened in the Fall of 2019, Eidson saw an opportunity to serve the OPSU leadership team through the Communications Department. In addition to her work at Panhandle State, Natasha is a full-time wife and mother while running her own photography business and pursuing an MBA emphasizing in Women in Leadership.

Vice President of Operations, Dr. Ryan Blanton, commented, "Natasha is one of the hardest working people I have ever been blessed to work with. Her dedication to leading and developing new initiatives is inspiring."

In October, Eidson attended the "Day at the Capitol" event in Oklahoma City for the 2020 NextGen Under 30 class. Natasha commented, "I was amazed by all of the young men and women that serve all across the state of Oklahoma." Due to COVID-19, the annual awards ceremony usually hosted in Norman, OK, was held virtually on January 22, 2021 online at www.nextgenunder30.com. **P**



/ STAFF /

LIZ MCMURPHY SERVES ON GUYMON CHAMBER BOARD

Associate Vice President of Fiscal Affairs, Elizabeth McMurry, serves as a director on the Guymon Chamber of Commerce board. The Guymon Chamber consists of 12 members, and each director serves on one committee in addition to the board.

McMurphy was selected to serve in July 2020, and she began attending meetings in August. She was nominated for the open position by current board members. In September, the new members selected were officially voted in. McMurry serves on two committees, Finance/Budget and Education.

McMurphy commented, "I enjoy serving on the Guymon Chamber Board. It's a group of great people in the community who care deeply about making a difference and it has provided me the opportunity to serve and be involved in the community in another aspect."

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn said, "Elizabeth McMurry has shown to be a leader at Panhandle State. She has always been an advocate for the University, as well as the community, and we could not be more proud of her."

Dr. Ryan Blanton, Vice President of Operations, said, "Elizabeth has displayed great success moving into the Associate Vice President of Fiscal Affairs position. I look forward to watching her continue this success with the Guymon Chamber." **P**



/ STAFF /

LAURA TORRES

Laura Torres, a Boise City native, has been serving as the Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Operations for the past two years.

Although Torres has only been working for Panhandle State for a few years, she is no stranger to the university. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in 2011. Laura is the first in her family to graduate high school and earn a college degree, so when she was offered a vocal scholarship close to home, it sealed the deal.

During her time as a student, Laura was involved in the music program. Both choir and band hold a special place in her heart from her time spent as a student. “I have met some of my greatest friends through the music department and will be forever great full for all the friendships and memories I have from being a part of the music department at OPSU,” Torres said.

Torres was excited for an opportunity to come back to the university as staff when the assistant position opened up in the Vice President of Operations office. She has the energy to continue helping the University be the best it can be, and she is always willing to help where it is needed.

Vice President of Operations, Dr. Ryan Blanton stated, “Laura is an excellent asset to our Operations team. Her work and efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic were instrumental in our campus’s ability to adapt operations and keep everyone as safe as possible.”

“My favorite thing about OPSU are the people that I work with and the passion they have to make the University better. They care about the students and want to make sure that they do everything in their power to make things great for everyone.”, said Torres.

When Laura is not busy at the University, she can be found giving all her attention to her son. Family is very important to her, and she tries to support them at all the events she can. In her free time, she enjoys music, whether it’s listening or performing and reading books. **P**



/ STUDENT /

AFFTON SCHLOCHTERMEIER

Affton Schlochtermeyer is a senior at Panhandle State, double majoring in Agribusiness and Marketing. A Russell, Kansas native, she has spent the past ten years in Meade, which helped her decide to attend OPSU.

Schlochtermeyer is no stranger to the Aggie Nation because she has three older siblings that all graduated from Panhandle State. “When I heard them talk about their experiences, I knew I wanted to be down here as well,” she said, “The size of the school is just perfect for me, and I love that you can go get help from professors that know your name and not have to refer to you as an ID number!”

During her time on campus, she has become extremely involved in student organizations. Her enthusiasm for the university made her the perfect fit to be an Ambassador and Aggie Leader. Schlochtermeyer currently serves as the Vice President of the OPSU Ambassadors.

When she isn’t giving tours, Affton can be found in the Student Affairs department. She enjoys being able to help put on events that provide students free, fun activities to do, and get out and meet new people.

Schlochtermeyer had no hesitation about her favorite part of Panhandle State. “The people for sure! I love that I can walk down the sidewalk and say hi to just about everyone. Not even just from students alone, but staff as well. There is so much of a difference being somewhere and going to school in a good environment, with people who want to see you succeed, rather than just going somewhere that wants your tuition money. And the difference is very obvious here!”

After graduation, Affton has hopes to intern with a marketing agency to gain more experience and opportunities through the process. Eventually, her goal is to own her own marketing agency. When she isn’t busy with campus activities, Affton has three older siblings that keep her on her toes. She used to show livestock and still helps her family with the breeding stock they raise. **P**



/ FACULTY /

KIM SMITH

Guymon Native and Panhandle State Alumna, Kim Smith holds many titles serving as a faculty member at OPSU. Kim graduated from OPSU in 2012 with two Bachelor's degrees in General Business and Computer Information Systems. She pursued an Executive Masters of Business Administration from Stetson University in DeLand, FL, and graduated in 2016. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Information Systems from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Kim's dream job was to become a college instructor. "As a student, I really took advantage of the many opportunities on campus and I firmly believe in the transformational chapter college provides to figure out who you are and what you want to do with your life. It was an easy decision to come back to Panhandle State on the faculty side because I knew I could continue to provide the excellent student experience I received."

Kim's roles on campus include Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Coordinator of Online Programs, Student Government Association Advisor, and Phi Beta Lambda Business Fraternity Advisor.

Kim stated, "Panhandle State is the land of opportunity." As an OPSU alumna, Kim knows firsthand the success of students thriving in a learning environment that fosters close student-faculty alliances, small class sizes, and valuable networking opportunities. Kim believes her purpose in life is to create opportunities for others, and she is very passionate about mentoring young adults into leadership roles.

"My favorite thing remains the same as from when I was a student. Opportunities for growth at Panhandle State are endless. I really enjoy being in the classroom, serving on faculty committees, and working with student leadership. I've also gained valuable hands on project management skills as the Coordinator of Online Programs."

On a personal note, Kim is married to her best friend, Drew Smith. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, volunteering, crafting, and spending time with her family. Out of all the titles she has held in her lifetime, Aunt is her favorite one. **P**



/ ALUMNI /

BECKY LAURIDSEN

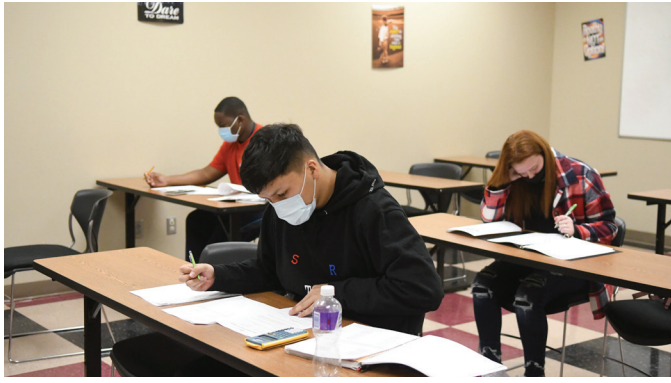
As a Craig, Colorado native, Becky Lauridsen has shined a light on the possibilities a degree from Panhandle State can open. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in 2010.

Lauridsen is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Founder of IOME. She has a passion for helping people be the best versions of themselves and founded a company that would be an asset for her clients' mental health. She explained, "It's an I Owe Me instead of an I Owe You, offering Guilt-Free Self-Care by providing discounted self-care services and products for our Community members. Each month, IOME offers a self-care blueprint for your mind, body, and soul. It's the perfect way to prevent burnout and other negative emotions."

Although she has always had a passion for the mental health industry, it is not what brought her to Goodwell. Lauridsen was offered a rodeo scholarship, and it was the perfect opportunity to compete at a higher level after high school. She noted, "OPSU was the perfect place to enter adulthood. It was just far enough away from home to have a sense of independence and freedom while close enough to travel home during the holidays and special occasions. I truly appreciated the small town and close connections that were made at Panhandle, the friends I met there are still some of my best friends today, 11 years later."

"Some of my favorite memories revolve around the rodeo team. Whether it was competing at the weekly rodeos or practicing at the weekly jackpots, these are days I miss dearly. OPSU is where I met and fell in love with my husband, Tyler Lauridsen," Becky stated. They have built a life with two daughters, Bryer and Bristol, and are finishing their arena in Northern Colorado.

During her downtime, you can find Becky at ropings supporting her husband, enjoying the shenanigans with her kids, and getting back to roping herself. "We are so excited to raise our girls with this crazy country lifestyle. Who knows, maybe they'll compete on the OPSU Rodeo Team someday, too!" said Lauridsen. **P**



/ CAMPUS /

PANHANDLE STATE SEES ENROLLMENT INCREASE FOR 8TH SEMESTER IN A ROW

According to the preliminary enrollment reports, Panhandle State is up 4.7% in headcount for the Spring 2021 semester compared to Spring 2020. There was also a 2% increase in credit hours compared to last year. This enrollment increase will mark Panhandle State's 8th semester in a row to see an increase.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn commented, "One of my goals for this semester is to focus on the positive. This growth in our enrollment numbers is something that we are very excited about."

Provost, Dr. Julie Dinger stated, "We accomplished this growth because of our faculty and staff. These students chose OPSU for the exceptional teaching our faculty provide in the classroom and online, for the personalized support they received in our staff offices, and because of our welcoming community. We are a special place for students."

The Office of Admissions has led combined efforts across campus to seek new recruiting methods to reach students. During this unprecedented year, adaptations to recruiting methods had to be made due to the limited face-to-face interaction.

Admissions Counselor, Sarah Wood commented, "The continuous growth of Panhandle State is a campus wide effort. Finding ways to safely make connections between future Aggies and their advisors, coaches, and mentors is key."

Critical to the spring increases over the last four years was the university retention strategy. Under the leadership of Dean Sarah Green, the Academic Resource Center has served all students to promote student success across their academic career. Academic interventions, tutoring, and academic coaching are available to students year round by faculty or student request. **P**

/ CAMPUS /

TRAINING WEBINARS TO BE HOSTED THIS SPRING



At Panhandle State, we are always looking for ways to better serve our campus community. For the spring semester, faculty members have joined together to train other faculty and staff members who are interested in online learning materials. Two training webinars will be held to offer resources and gauge need to better address any questions we have across campus.

Provost, Dr. Julie Dinger stated, "These trainings were requested by the Deans and Department Chairs and I'm so pleased with the plan created by Dean Stephens and Ms. Smith. The webinars will highlight our faculty's expertise and creativity in teaching and learning; these promise to be excellent sessions."

Dean of Online Programs, Tye Stephens commented, "As we continue to expand our online programs and the use of online technology in all our courses, I'm hoping these trainings can help provide us all with common language as well as an opportunity to identify and address needs that instructors have. It's important we take time to connect with each other personally and professionally, even in our current circumstances."

Coordinator of Online Programs, Kim Smith stated, "We have certainly experienced firsthand the importance of adaptability and flexibility throughout the past year of navigating multiple methods of course delivery during a global pandemic. The collective growth across campus in relation to the use of technology in any learning environment is something to be admired. I expect the webinars to be very interactive in terms of lessons learned and identifying common topics of areas that could use additional professional development opportunities in the future. I believe these conversations will allow us to come together to share experiences and best practices to make us better as a whole."

All faculty and staff members are welcome to attend the webinars, and are encouraged to send ideas and questions they hope to discuss. These questions should be sent in beforehand so a roundtable discussion can be formed prior to the meeting.

For additional information, please contact Tye Stephens by email at tye.stephens@opsu.edu **P**

/CAMPUS/

PANHANDLE STATE EDUCATION STUDENTS START STUDENT TEACHING THIS SEMESTER



The College of Arts and Education at Oklahoma Panhandle State University is excited for the Spring 2021 student teachers. These students will be teaching in Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado.

Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Brad Duren stated, “The Teacher Education department at OPSU plays an essential role in providing competent, caring, and committed professional educators to schools throughout the region. This group of student interns represent those standards well, and I am confident they will excel in their student teaching experiences. Their commitment to their craft is a reflection of our outstanding Teacher Education faculty, who model standards of excellence in all they do.”

The student teachers for this semester include Katie Winters, Elementary Education, interning at Texhoma, TX; Lara Allen, Agriculture Education, interning at Stratford, TX; Regan Morlan, Agriculture Education, interning at Cheraw, CO; Kaylee Johnson, Elementary Education, interning at Guymon, OK; Samantha Manuel, Elementary Education, interning at Walsh, CO; Kali Kenny, health and physical education, interning at Stratford, TX; Hadly McCormick, Agriculture Education, interning at Stratford, TX; and Braiden Galla, health and physical education, interning at Canadian, TX.

Interim Director of Teacher Education and Assistant Professor, Shelly Worm commented, “It’s an exciting time for our student interns to be in the classroom! They now get the chance to put theory into practice under the guidance of their highly qualified and competent cooperating teacher! They will face experiences and challenges that allow them to spread their wings and fly. We are proud of all our interns and feel that they have been prepared to meet the high demands of today’s teaching experiences!” **P**



/ALUMNI/

CLAIRE TOLBERT NAMED SPRING 2021 ALUMNI ON THE MOVE

Claire Tolbert, a Santa Fe native, is the Spring 2021 Alumni On the Move honoree. A 2013 graduate of Panhandle State, received a degree in Computer Information Systems and was nominated by Nick Tuttle.

“As a fellow IT person and classmate of hers at OPSU, I have been inspired by not only her success in the field but especially by her volunteer and community work and drive for positive change. When this award came up, I knew she would be a well-deserving recipient.”, said Tuttle.

Tolbert was attracted to the university after reading an article by Dr. Richter in regards to second chances. At the time, she was a college dropout entertaining the idea of going back to school, so she reached out to Dr. Richter.

Tolbert is currently a Performance Engineer and .NET Developer at Alkami Technology in Plano, Texas. She works with new clients during their launch phase, troubleshooting existing production problems, and writing tools to automate repetitive tasks.

“I’ve returned to OPSU several times since graduating, and I still feel at home. It feels like family, more than anything else. The bonds that are formed on campus are some of the strongest ever. I’m still very close with several of my classmates,” Tolbert said.

Claire lives in Plano with her partner, George, and their corgi, Pancake. In the times she isn’t busy with her company, Tolbert enjoys unplugging from the world. This includes playing board games, reading a good book, and taking a trip to remote areas. **P**



/ATHLETICS/

JOSH DAVIS TO LEAD WOMEN'S SOCCER

Oklahoma Panhandle State University Interim Director of Athletics, Victor Esparza, has announced that veteran coach Josh Davis has been named as the program's new head women's soccer coach. Davis brings a breadth of experience to the Aggies', including at NCAA Divisions I, II and III, as well as with both high school and top club programs.

"We are very excited to have Coach Davis join the OPSU family," Esparza said. "He has a track record of helping teams become winners on the field. Likewise, he brings in a history of success in terms of both recruiting and academic achievement. I look forward to having him take our program to the next level."

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "I believe Coach Davis will bring an extensive background of experience to Panhandle State as the new Women's Soccer Coach. Along with his experience comes drive and passion for helping student athletes achieve success on and off the pitch."

While guiding the Panhandle State women's soccer team will be Davis' first college head coaching position, he takes on the task with nearly 20 years of experience at his back (many at the NCAA Division I level). Most recently, Davis was the associate head coach at the University of North Dakota (2018), University of Idaho (2014-2018) and first assistant coach at IUPUI-Fort Wayne (2013-14). Prior to that, he was the first assistant at NCAA II California State University, San Bernardino (2013) and NCAA III Whittier College (2011-12). He began his college coaching career as a volunteer assistant at NCAA I California State University, Fullerton (2008-10).

Davis earned his Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiology from Cal State, Fullerton in 2009. He was awarded a Master of Arts in coaching and athletic administration from Concordia University-Irvine in 2013.

"I want to thank President Dr. Tim Faltyn and Interim Director of Athletics Victor Esparza for giving me this opportunity to lead the Women's Soccer program," Davis said. "I am honored and thankful to be the next head coach at Oklahoma Panhandle State University and thrilled to start. I am eager to hit the ground running and am looking forward to implementing a culture that will allow the student-athletes to be challenged, compete, and grow academically, athletically, and socially." **P**

/ATHLETICS/

ESPITIA JOINS AGGIES AS CHEER COACH



Oklahoma Panhandle State University's competitive cheer program welcomed Allyn-Michael Espitia as its new head coach to begin the 2021 year. Espitia brings an extensive background in cheerleading to the Aggies' team.

Espitia comes to the Panhandle State program after coaching the Memphis Pride team in 2020. He also coached Cheers & More from 2017-19. He spent three years on the National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) Speed and College staff.

A native of Maysville, Oklahoma, Espitia cheered at the University of Oklahoma for three years. He earned his bachelor's degree in multidisciplinary studies and human relations (2020). As a member of the Sooners' cheer squad for three years, Espitia helped the unit to one top-10 and one top-5 finish at the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) national championships.

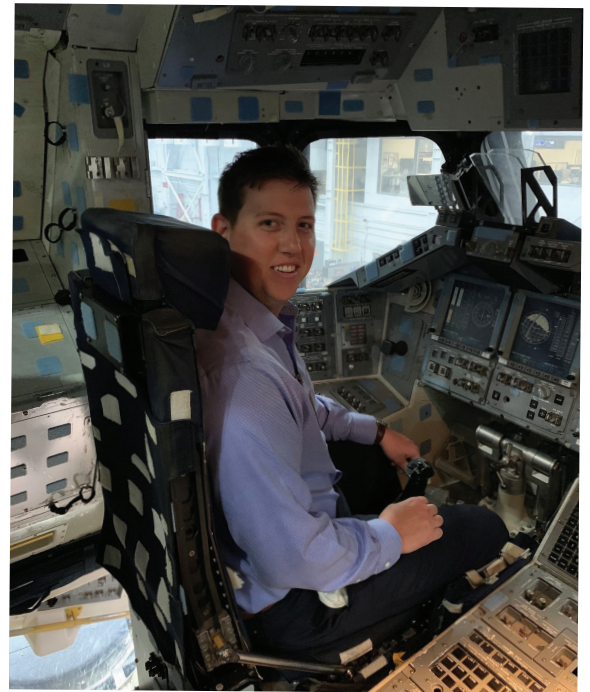
In 2020, he was an NCA top-15 qualifier in Partner Stunt competition.

Prior to that, Espitia cheered for two years at Cameron University. While at Cameron, the squad had a top-3 finish at the UCA nationals, as well.

As a member of Cheers & More Revolve, the team was a two-time second place finisher at the NCA nationals. While on Cheer Athletics Claw, his group also earned runner-up finish at the NCA nationals. **P**

/ATHLETICS/

OPSU EXPERIENCE LAUNCHES AN OUT-OF- THIS-WORLD CAREER FOR FORMER AGGIE BASEBALL PLAYER



It's a long way from Goodwell, Oklahoma to the International Space Station (ISS), but former Aggie baseball player Jeremy Norris (cl. 2019) found a way to make the connection after graduation. Norris is part of a small group of data experts contracted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - as a part of its much-larger team - which keeps the ISS soaring 254 miles above the earth.

Norris is part of the nine-member Mission Control Center Recon unit – which includes three other former Aggies in team leader Paul Roberts (cl. 2001), Dave Montoya (cl. 1999) and Jorge Rosas (cl. 2019) – and has the title of Recon and Training Operations Specialist, serving as a part of NASA's Mission Systems Operation contract. In layman's terms, Norris and company provide telemetry products that allows data to be received from the ISS. They also provide products that allows for the flight controllers to send commands to the station.

The team also processes flight software from partners (like Boeing); taking the software and reconfiguring it for whatever mission is upcoming for the ISS. Norris' work has also afforded him the opportunity to work closely with the Canadian Space Agency on software for its Canadarm2 of the ISS.

And NASA's own information on the ISS points out the need for people with Norris' skills. According to ISS Facts and Figures, more than 50 computers control the systems on the space station. There are more than 3 million lines of software code on the ground support. In the International Space Station's U.S. segment alone, more than 1.5 million lines of flight software code run on 44 computers communicating via 100 data networks transferring 400,000 signals (e.g. pressure or temperature measurements, valve positions, etc.).

"OPSU got me started along the lines of computers for sure," Norris said. "When I first got there, that was one of my interests. I always had an interest (in space), but I would say the job fell in my lap. It really intrigued me; I was like 'wow, this is a lot cooler than I ever thought it could be'. My brother and my girlfriend's brothers are all pilots, so my family has always been interested in flight."

Norris found out about the job possibility of working with NASA one day after class, as Roberts had reached back to his OPSU roots to see if there were any current Computer Information Systems students interested in an opening. Norris jumped at the chance and did a phone interview. The chips further fell into place for Norris as OPSU's Computer Club was going to Houston for a competition shortly thereafter, allowing him to hitch a ride, do an in-person interview and also take part in the competition with his fellow Aggies.

"The computer department at OPSU is just so good," Norris recounted. "It really teaches us the right problem-solving skills. They do a great job. I had a class with each and every member of the CIS department and they are phenomenal; the structure of the classes and the small class sizes."

Norris, who began his college baseball career at Grand Canyon University, feels that OPSU's class structure was particularly helpful in transitioning seamlessly to his career. "You can definitely get lost in the shuffle (at a larger university). I couldn't even schedule an appointment with a professor there; which blew my mind. Then I come to OPSU and it's like 'yeah, anytime you need something my door's always open', so that was pretty awesome. With the smaller class sizes at OPSU it was very familiar for me to work. It definitely helped me for the future."

"Everyone says baseball is a grind," Norris explained. "A lot of games; long season. That kind of translates to life. I think baseball brings out some mental toughness norris that can help you down the line. And teamwork. Everything I do I work with a team... and it's a really big collaborative effort. I think OPSU exemplifies that. In the classroom it's very collaborative as far as the CIS program and on the baseball field you've got to have nine guys. You can't do it by yourself. The teamwork aspect is really big, and the comradery." **P**



/ATHLETICS/

AGGIE BASEBALL TO HOST SERIES, ALUMNI EVENT AT AMARILLO'S HODGETOWN STADIUM

Oklahoma Panhandle State University Head Baseball Coach Shawn Joy has announced that his team will host a February 20-21 weekend series versus the University of the Southwest in Amarillo, Texas at Hodgetown Stadium. The Aggies will play noon doubleheaders each day versus the Mustangs, at the home of the minor league Amarillo Sod Poodles, and also host a special event open to all Panhandle State Alumni at Sunday's games.

Admission will be free of charge both days for all fans.

"We have many OPSU alums who live in or around Amarillo and this is a great way to get them all together," Joy said. "Playing at a first-class professional stadium will be a great experience for our players and fans. Aggie Nation is a special group of people and we want to get them all together and have some fun"

Hodgetown Stadium is located in the heart of downtown Amarillo and opened on April 8, 2019 as the newest sports and entertainment destination in Amarillo, with state-of-the-art facilities and an unprecedented commitment to quality and service. It features a full range of programming that includes professional and affiliated baseball as well as events like high school and college games, concerts, themed events, and much more. The venue plays host and brings guests from all around the nation to downtown Amarillo annually.

The facility is named in honor of Jerry Hodge, who spearheaded the effort along with other community leaders to bring affiliated, professional baseball back to Amarillo. Jerry is a family-man, pharmacist, businessman, civic leader, philanthropist, and long-time Amarillo resident, who has made an amazing impact in the Amarillo community over the past 50 years.

While admission is free to all, OPSU alumni – and their families – who are interested in attending are asked to RSVP to Panhandle State's Alumni Office at opsu.alumni@opsu.edu or by calling 580-349-1390. Food and beverages will be served for Alumni at the Stadium's Clubroom Suite. **P**

/ATHLETICS/

CASSIA MCCASKILL NAMED SAC PLAYER OF THE WEEK



The amazing start to the 2021 portion of the women's basketball season by Oklahoma Panhandle State University senior Cassia McCaskill has not gone without notice. As the forward has been named as this Sooner Athletic Conference "Player of the Week" award winner. McCaskill – a native of Townsville, Australia – had amazing averages last week of 26.3 points, 7.3 rebounds, 1.3 assists and 1.7 steals for the Aggies' three contests.

"Cassia has been working extremely hard since this summer," OPSU Head Coach Victor Esparza said. "I am glad that her hard work is paying off. I'm proud of her and the way she has accepted the challenge in her senior year." **P**



/ ATHLETICS /

SPLIT SEASON GIVES AGGIE FOOTBALL A CHANCE TO EVALUATE NEWCOMERS AHEAD OF SAC SLATE

All fall sports were affected due to COVID-19 since the NAIA and SAC moved their championship seasons to this spring. Oklahoma Panhandle State University Football's veteran head coach Bob Majeski has sought to turn the situation into a positive.

"To make a cross-sport reference, all the arguing in the world won't change the umpire's decision," Majeski surmised. "So, our approach has been to make the best of the situation and turn it to an advantage. We view the 'split-season' format as a unique opportunity to evaluate our young players in game situations in the fall. We now will have time to adjust and slot people on our depth chart after seeing them in real game action, before resuming the season in the spring of 2021 when we all are 0-0 in the Sooner Athletic Conference race."

"Lots of our young men were able to show what they can do in the fall, non-conference portion of the season. We saw 12 different ball carriers on the ground, 14 receivers caught at least one pass and 41 folks registered a defensive statistic. I'd say that's making use of all of our resources."

On the ground, newcomer Jamalrian Jones amassed 131 yards on 26 attempts, an average of 5.0 yards per carry, and scored a pair of rushing touchdowns. Returner Danny Valverde Jr. averaged 3.6 yards per carry.

At quarterback, incumbent Shawn Cumby split time with freshman KC Crandall, before Crandall was lost in the team's final game to an ankle injury. The duo posted similar numbers, as Cumby completed 56.9 percent of his throws for 363 yards and two TD's and Crandall hit 50 percent of his passes for 305 yards and three scores.

Returning receivers Seth Barbarino and Jaishone Brown were the main targets once again in the fall. Barbarino caught a team-leading 26 passes for 184 yards. Brown had eight receptions, but proved a big-play threat at 19.8 yards per catch (158 receiving yards) and two touchdowns.

On defense, a quintet of returning players each amassed better than 20 tackles in the fall, led by senior defensive back Warren Dillon's 37 tackles (19 solo). Dillon also had an interception and a fumble recovery to his credit.

Fellow DB's junior Ja'Quavion Daniels and sophomore Joshua Stullivan added 29 and 25 tackles, respectively. Stullivan has a team-best five pass break-ups on his ledger, thus far.

Linebackers Anthony Taylor, a senior, and sophomore Malachi Green-Hightower check in with 24 and 21 tackles, apiece.

The Aggies resume action on February 20, with a home game versus Wayland Baptist University in a SAC bout at Anchor D Stadium.

"We are eager to get back at it," Majeski said. "We need our young men to step up, use the experiences gained in the fall and attack the conference schedule." **P**

Top Hand Auction



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