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**EXCELLENCE IN
CONTINUED GROWTH**



/ CAMPUS /

OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY TO ISSUE ADDITIONAL CARES STUDENT AID GRANTS

Oklahoma Panhandle State University understands that the disruption to daily life caused by COVID-19 includes financial hardships for many in the Aggie Family.

The U.S. Department of Education announced additional funding allocated to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (HEERF II) by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), which was signed into law on Dec. 27, 2020. OPSU is also able to provide additional financial assistance with this funding to our students who have been economically impacted by this global pandemic through the federally funded CARES Act.

Student eligibility for financial assistance through the Panhandle State CARES Student Aid Grant is determined by the U.S. Department of Education. Students enrolled in the Fall and/or Spring 2021 semesters are eligible to apply for the funds. At this time, international and non-citizens students are not eligible for the funds.

If you have not already applied, please complete the short application form at my.opsu.edu to be considered for your Panhandle State CARES Student Aid Grant. Students will need their student ID number to apply.

OPSU also has academic, activity, and athletic scholarships available. For information on how to apply, go to scholarships.opsu.edu

OPSU looks forward to opening campus with a safe return this Fall with face-to-face instruction, hybrid instruction, and online instruction to meet all of the various student needs. **P**

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/ CAMPUS /

EVENTS ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY







“Being the fastest growing university for the fourth year in a row is a huge accomplishment for not only our students, faculty, and staff, but also our region. It amazes me that with few resources, we do great things.”

— *Dr. Tim Faltyn,*
University President

/ CAMPUS /

PANHANDLE STATE FASTEST GROWING UNIVERSITY IN THE REGION FOR 4TH YEAR IN A ROW

Panhandle State proudly announces that it is the fastest growing university in the region for the fourth year in a row. After regional universities' enrollment report comparisons, Panhandle State's enrollment out ranked Northwestern Oklahoma State University, West Texas A&M University, Eastern New Mexico University, and New Mexico Highlands University.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn commented, “Being the fastest growing university for the fourth year in a row is a huge accomplishment for not only our students, faculty, and staff, but also our region. It amazes me that with few resources, we do great things.”

During a four-year time period between 2016 and 2020, a twelve percent increase in enrollment has set Panhandle State apart. Panhandle State reported a rapid growth in enrollment with an eighteen percent increase from 2017 to 2020.

Provost, Dr. Julie Dinger stated, “Our students choose Panhandle State because of the welcoming community that is first to engage with them, and the faculty that provide exceptional teaching both in the classroom and online. We look forward to the next year of new programs and opportunities to continue this growth.”

This spring, the university reported its eighth consecutive semester of enrollment increases. During this unprecedented year, adaptations were made all across of campus to reach students due to the limited face-to-face interaction. The Office of Admissions led the combined efforts across campus to seek new recruiting methods to reach students.

Interim Director of Admissions, Sarah Wood stated, “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.”

Panhandle State continues to implement new programs and opportunities for students that are expected to assist the increase in enrollment. The Title V Grant, Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions is one of the implementations that will expand our support with the Hispanic Student Support Center to better meet needs.

While the enrollment increases, Panhandle State looks forward to reaching more students with support for their success in the future. **P**



/ CAMPUS /

OPSU OPEN FOR TRADITIONAL CAMPUS EXPERIENCE FOR FALL 2021 SEMESTER

OPSU is pleased to announce that for the Fall 2021 Semester, students, faculty, and staff will return to a traditional experience on campus. As Fastest Growing University in the Region, Panhandle State looks forward to continuing its excellence.

University President Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "We look forward to a brighter and more familiar fall semester because of the hard work put in by the staff and faculty. Our goal is always to offer a first-class educational experience at Panhandle State while keeping our community safe."

Enrollment for Summer and Fall classes opened on March 22nd.

Provost Dr. Julie Dinger stated, "The faculty of OPSU have led the way in providing the best student experience in every mode of instruction. The innovation from faculty in finding ways to provide flexible and effective educational experiences for our students is outstanding."

Dean of Student Services, Amber Glass commented, "We are looking forward to having students back on campus for a normal semester. While our students' safety remains our top priority, we are excited to host more events for them to participate in this fall. We are dedicated to making our students' experiences the best ever at OPSU."

Athletic Director, Victor Esparza commented, "Athletics will go back to its traditional sports season and get back to a more familiar year like we are all accustomed too. As guidelines are set by the NAIA, we will make sure to communicate to all of our supporters. I look forward to seeing all of our Aggie Nation back in the stands supporting our athletes."

Vice President of Operations, Dr. Ryan Blanton, stated, "We will continue to monitor and update our protocols following state and national health guidance and update our campus community as we move forward towards traditional campus activities."

Please check our OPSU website regularly at <https://opsu.edu/coronavirus> for the most updated information. **P**

/ DIVERSITY & INCLUSION /

OPSU STUDENTS TELL THEIR STORIES



Annette Gandara was drawn to Panhandle State for its affordability and the small campus environment, like the small town she grew up in. Originally from Canadian, Texas, Annette plans to graduate in May of 2022 with a double major in English and History with a minor in Biology.

Annette is passionate about helping others. She is currently the Vice President of HALO (Hispanic American Leadership Organization) and a cheer team member. "Both organizations give me that platform to support others in different ways." She continued, "Being able to help others in any way possible is something that I grew up doing and have fell in love with."

Panhandle State is the first and only Hispanic Serving Institution in Oklahoma. Annette said, "Enrolling at a University where the Hispanic community is a majority brought a feeling of hope and acceptance. As the first and only Hispanic Serving Institution in Oklahoma, it seems as though more students, myself included, feel more misunderstood than ever. The Hispanic community is founded on hard work and conservative views, and our education is our safe place. It's where we, as young Hispanics, can pave our paths. I am a Mexican-American woman pushing through ethnic and cultural adversity."

College students are faced with many challenges. Annette touched on a few of the areas that have been challenging for her. "I have faced a lot of challenges throughout my college career, but some that impacted me more include learning the importance of discipline and keeping my priorities straight." She continued, "There are a lot of distractions in college, so it can be hard to focus on what needs to be done, but thankfully, I found that solid support system that helped me find my way back."

Annette stated, "Many don't understand the constant battle that minority students face daily. Every day, we have to prove our worth, our intelligence, and ourselves. My success isn't just mine, it's my family's, and it's a success for the Hispanic community as well." **P**



/ STAFF /

JOEY GLASS

Muskogee, Oklahoma native, Joey Glass, started working for Panhandle State in 2017 as part of the maintenance staff. He spends a lot of his time all across campus, making sure everything is functional and a place we can all be proud of.

Glass graduated from Muskogee High School in 2003 and became HVAC certified in 2016. He was brought to Panhandle State when his wife, Amber Glass, was presented with a job opportunity. Once arriving on campus to start their next chapter, Glass learned that the Physical Plant was hiring. He became part of the maintenance staff and has been with the department for a few years.

When asked what his favorite thing about Panhandle State was, Glass stated, “The people I work alongside.” Glass and the maintenance staff wear many different hats at Panhandle State. Some of the tasks in this role are building maintenance, setting up for events, and grounds keeping.

Director of Physical Plant, Robby Johnson, said, “Joey is an excellent employee, and I appreciate him. He is someone I can rely on to get any job done that is asked of him. I am thankful to have him on my team.”

Glass has been married to Amber for 15 years, and they have three beautiful daughters, Madison, Sophia, and Hattie. They spend most of their time enjoying family. If you can’t find Joey on campus or with his family, he enjoys getting away to hunt, fish, and do woodworking. **P**



/ STUDENT /

JAYDEN VALDEZ

Jayden Valdez has been a leader in the Student Government Association and an essential member of the Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP). The Adams, Oklahoma native came to Panhandle State to study Computer Information Systems and is on the path to graduate in 2023.

Valdez decided Panhandle State was the place for him after taking a CIS department tour, where he met with faculty. He said, “Two of the faculty members took the time to talk with me about all things technology. I was fascinated by the server that is housed in Carter Hall, and I learned that Panhandle would be a great place to learn more about technology and prepare me for a future career as an information technology professional.”

The community on campus has brought Valdez opportunities to network among peers and develop his leadership skills. He is the current President of AITP and newly elected Vice President of SGA. Valdez commented, “Panhandle has given me the opportunity to venture out of my comfort zone and grow as a person and a leader.”

When Valdez is not focusing on his studies and enhancing the student experience at Panhandle State, he enjoys being outdoors as much as possible. He continues to serve as an Eagle Scout and enjoys researching new topics in technology to stay current. Valdez is one of eight siblings and a third-generation Panhandle State student. **P**



/ FACULTY /

DAREN STEPHENS

Inman, Kansas native, Daren Stephens, has made Panhandle State his home for over 20 years. Better known as Chief, he is a long-time member of the Ag Department as both alumni and faculty.

Stephens graduated from Panhandle State in 2000 with a bachelor of science in Animal Science after transferring from a junior college. He said, “I first came to OPSU to participate in a livestock judging contest when I was in Junior College. I liked the campus and people I met that day, so I returned for a JUCO transfer day to check out the school.” He went on to earn his Masters of Agribusiness in 2015 from Kansas State University.

As Instructor of Agriculture, Stephens interacts with students a majority of his time, and they have become one of his favorite parts of Panhandle State. He commented, “I have always enjoyed the type and kind of students we get for the most part. I enjoy interacting with most students. I like seeing where they go in life.”

When he is not in the classroom, Stephens can be found at the Estes E. Firestone Meat Lab on campus. “Having a meats facility to work in has been a great thing,” said Stephens. There is little free time for Stephens between Panhandle State and the small herd of commercial cattle he is partnered on with a long-time college friend. **P**



/ ALUMNI /

KEVIN TANKERSON

Kevin Tankerson, originally from Lake Charles, Louisiana, now represents the Aggies in Oklahoma City. He graduated from Panhandle State in 2016 with a Bachelor’s in History.

Tankerson is currently the Associate Pastor at The Christ Experience and Lambuth Memorial United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City. While a student at Panhandle State, he played football which is what brought him to Goodwell.

“In the beginning, I was not a fan of the small-town life because I am from a larger city. However, I gained a lot of appreciation for OPSU’s small-town feel. My adoration for OPSU’s community increased after I graduated because I realized an environment like OPSU is what I needed to grow”, stated Tankerson.

During his time on campus, Tankerson was actively involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He said, “My time in Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) was amazing. This group was a lot of fun, I made some great friends, and it helped me develop my faith and leadership skills.”

In his free time, Tankerson spends time with his wife, Alejandra, and their 1-year-old daughter. They are currently expecting the arrival of their son later in the summer. A fun fact about Kevin is that he enjoys cooking.

Tankerson looks forward to his trips back to the Panhandle to watch Aggie Football. Many people on campus and in the community make him proud to be an alum, and he looks forward to seeing their faces. **P**



/ STUDENT /

ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER HOSTS 2ND ANNUAL CONNECTION EVENT

The Academic Resource Center hosted Aggie Connections on May 12th at the University House. The event was created to promote networking with seniors and area businesses. Over thirty students attended and twelve area businesses sponsored the event.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn commented, "I am always impressed by the dedication and commitment that the Academic Resource Center gives to our students. Our mission of serving the students and giving them everything they need to succeed shines bright in this area of campus. The Aggie Connections event was a great way for our community members to interact with our amazing students as they enter into the professional workforce. Special thanks to all our business partners who participated. Their support is crucial to our success. It is inspiring to see the work the ARC does behind the scenes for such an event, and I look forward to more events similar to this."

Dean of Academic Resources, Sarah Green stated, "We are so proud of our students. They are exceptional, and after this past year, we relish the opportunity to show them off. The people at this University and in our surrounding communities are special, and we are appreciative all of their support."

The Academic Resource Center would like to thank the following businesses for being True Blue and Crimson Red Sponsors: Anchor D Bank, Bank of the Panhandle, Brown, Graham & Company, P.C., Charles White State Farm, Equity Bank, Golden Plains Credit Union, Panhandle Counseling & Health Center, PTCL, and Seaboard Foods. **P**

/ STUDENT /

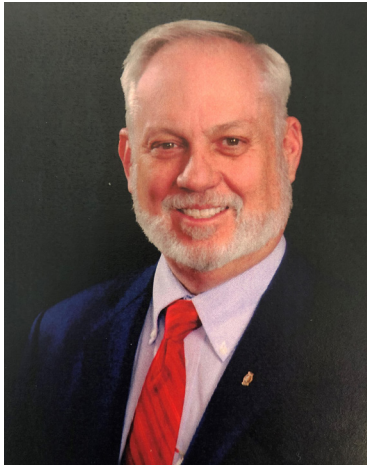
23RD ANNUAL ART JUBILEE AT PANHANDLE STATE



The OPSU Art Department and the Images Art Club hosted around 500 students from 15 different high school districts at the 23rd Annual Art Jubilee on April 14th. The students were able to compete in a colorful chalk art contest, 2D/3D art contests, and participate in a handful of workshops.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "All the creativity and talent were awesome to see! I walked the Plaza area to find that almost all of our sidewalks were covered with beautiful art drawn by students. Thank you to our Art Department and all the support areas for hosting this event and allowing so many young creatives to come and do what they love!"

Department Chair of Art, Brent Shoulders commented, "The art department would like to thank all of our sponsors, the community, and all of the high schools from the 5 state area who attended and supported such a great day of art! We couldn't have asked for better weather, a better group of students and teachers, and we always look forward to seeing our art friends from all over. The sense of normalcy that this year's Jubilee brought was a breath of fresh air, and we were extremely pleased with how smoothly it all came together! The artwork was high caliber and the workshops went amazingly well." **P**



Judge Ronald Kincannon



Douglas Steele



David Petty



Louis Sims



ALUMNI

/ALUMNI/

ALUMNI HALL OF FAME

The Panhandle State Association of Alumni and Friends is proud to announce the 2021 Alumni Hall of Fame Induction. This year will be a double induction of the 2020 and 2021 Hall of Fame honorees. The honorees will be recognized on May 22nd on campus for all to join.

Judge Ronald Kincannon and Dr. Douglas Steele will be inducted as the 2020 honorees as their ceremony was postponed last year. The 2021 inductees will be David Petty and Louis Sims.

Judge Ronald Kincannon graduated from Panhandle State in 1970, receiving a degree in Psychology with a minor in Math and Military Science. He had a decorated career in the U.S. Army. Kincannon went on to practice law, and in time was elected to serve as a judge in Cimarron County. He served for 24 years before retiring to spend time with his family. Judge Kincannon was a vital part of the Panhandle Promise at OPSU for our education students.

Douglas Steele attended Panhandle State on a basketball scholarship and graduated in 1981, majoring in Animal Science and Agribusiness. Steele continued his education, earning his highest degree in 1992. He has had a 40-year career in higher education through Cooperative extension and land-grant universities. Steele is now the Vice President, Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources for the Association of Public & Land-grant Universities (APLU).

David Petty graduated from OSU in 1961 and went on to law school at the University of Oklahoma, where he earned his license with honors in 1964. During his continued law career, Petty obtained several achievements with the Oklahoma Bar Association and Oklahoma Bar Foundation. He continues to practice law in the Panhandle while serving on the Foundation Board at Panhandle State.

Louis Sims graduated in 1956 when he was drafted into the U.S. Army. Since he had earned a bachelor's degree, he became a Special Agent in the army, which started a decorated career. After the Army, Sims became a Secret Service Agent, where he served under six presidents. Sims retired after 20 years of service to pursue a career as the Vice President at Pennzoil Company. Once he retired for the third time, Sims now devotes his time to the Hobart community. **P**



/IN REMEMBRANCE OF/

PANHANDLE STATE STRONG

Panhandle State has come out on top of several challenges over the past year in the pandemic, but this spring semester, the community was affected by two separate tragedies involving members from the Livestock Judging Team and the Rodeo Team. The Aggie Nation has shown true strength through the heartbreaking loss of three inspiring men over the past two months.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "This has been a difficult season of life for all us. These boys meant so much to our campus and the surrounding communities. It's true, every day is a good day to be an Aggie, even when we don't understand or, are sad and frustrated. Our hearts, thoughts and prayers are with the families of those we have lost their loved ones this spring. While they may not be with us anymore, those we have lost live on in the best parts of who we are as individuals and as a community. Our try, our character, our grit, and our intelligence are them shining through us as we overcome the adversity of not just this day, but every day! Our best days are reflections of positive impact they've had on us and the world around us."

OPSU was notified of the loss of Lukas Simmons on the morning of February 10th, 2021. Lukas had transferred from Eastern Wyoming College of Torrington, Wyoming, to become a member of the OPSU Livestock Judging Team.

Lukas was a bright young man who left an unforgettable impression on his teammates and friends with his humble and witty personality. Simmons grew up showing lambs, pigs, goats, mini horses, a catch-a-calf, ducks, and even cats and a fish. He had a love for livestock and a passion for judging; he was always excited to talk about judging and to compete in contests. Although he was as competitive as they come, Lukas was also the first to greet you with a friendly hug and warm hello. His family, friends, and peers have remembered the laughs he gave them and look forward to seeing that incredible smile again.

Panhandle State started to find their new normal without Lukas when another horrific accident happened on March 26th, 2021.

A life-changing wreck involving three of the Panhandle State Rodeo Team members and their horses occurred on the way to Garden City College Rodeo. The accident resulted in the loss of Cinch Bullock and Hadly McCormick. There were two horses lost in the wreck, which were both Cinch and Hadly's head horses. The third person, Ira Dickinson, was taken to the hospital with a concussion and minor abrasions.

Cinch was a strong-willed young man that always saw the positive in life. He grew up on his family's ranch in Campo, Colorado, where his love for horses and rodeo was second nature. Bullock was a freshman on the OPSU Rodeo Team, but he was no stranger to the winning tradition. He watched his older siblings compete in the Panhandle State vest, and it was his dream to wear that same vest. Cinch loved to rope calves and always made sure his horses had the best of the best. He lost his head horse, Gocho, in the accident with him.

Hadly was a young man always willing to learn and help out where needed. He grew up in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, on his family's ranch, which gave him a love for horses. McCormick attended Central Wyoming College in Riverton, Wyoming, before transferring to OPSU to become an Ag teacher. He was talented in shaping the minds of the younger generation, which was apparent by those that he was student teaching at Stratford High School. Hadly loved to rope calves and watch the athleticism of horses showcased. In the accident, Hadly lost his head horse, Buck.

Panhandle State continues to honor these three incredible young men by living lives they would be proud of. The Aggie Family has pulled together in the most trying times and shown what it is to be, Panhandle Strong. **P**

/IN REMEMBRANCE OF/

**LUKAS BRIAN
SIMMONS**

DECEMBER 20, 1998 - FEBRUARY 10, 2021

BEAR RIVER, WYOMING



/IN REMEMBRANCE OF/

**CADE CINCH
BULLOCK**

MAY 1, 2001 - MARCH 26, 2021

CAMPO, COLORADO

/IN REMEMBRANCE OF/

**HADLY GARY
MCCORMICK**

SEPTEMBER 5, 1997 - MARCH 26, 2021

SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA



/ ATHLETICS /

AGGIE MEN'S SOCCER EARN SAC PLAYOFF SPOT



Oklahoma Panhandle State University men's soccer is two-for-two in earning post-season playoff spots. In just its second year of existence, the Aggies (4-7-4) program will once again be a part of the Sooner Athletic Conference playoffs, earning the No. 7-seed and a date at No. 2-seed Mid-America Christian University (12-3-1) in Friday's (April 2/7 p.m.) quarterfinal round.

OPSU was also a SAC tourney qualifier in its inaugural season of 2019.

"Making it to the conference tournament for a second straight year is very exciting for a young program," OPSU Head Coach Brandon Misuraca said. "The ups and downs faced by this side during a split season sophomore campaign has forged a battle hardened group."

Aggie Men's Soccer was also recognized with two SAC Honor-Roll students, Hugo Dutour and Tayze Ellington.

"I'm very happy for Hugo and Tayze," OPSU Head Coach Brandon Misuraca said. "To be recognized with two players in a conference so rich in talent as the SAC, is something to be proud of and speaks well of the direction of our program. This is another 'brick' as we continue the building process of Panhandle State Men's Soccer." **P**

/ ATHLETICS /

AGGIE BASKETBALL TEAMS SECURE SPOTS IN THE SAC TOURNAMENTS



Both the Women's and Men's Basketball teams secured spots in the SAC Tournament after double wins against Central Christian College.

"I am so proud of how hard our entire team played this evening, Esparza said. "I'm especially proud of our three seniors who have given so much to this program. Tonight we secured a spot in the conference tournament and are looking forward to our matchup on Tuesday."

OPSU Men's Basketball secured the number 8-seed on the SAC Tournament bracket.

"This was a great team win and the next step for program...making the SAC tournament," OPSU Head Coach Mark Laird said. "We were unselfish and played our style the way we want to all the time. 28 assists and 14 turnovers were both the best we've done against any SAC opponent this year. We have earned the right to play one more game. That's all you can hope for at this time of year."

As well as earning a spot to play at the conference tournament, three players earned post-season honors from the SAC. Recognized on the all-SAC teams were women's basketball players Cassia McCaskill (second team) and Tateum Jones (honorable mention), as well as men's basketball standout Jalen Thomas (third team). **P**





/ ATHLETICS /

CASSIA MCCASKILL EARNS ALL-AMERICAN HONOR

The Women’s Basketball Coaches Association has announced its 2020-21 All-American honorees and Oklahoma Panhandle State University’s Cassia McCaskill has earned honorable mention recognition. McCaskill is a native of Townsville, Australia and in her second season as a member of the Aggies.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, “Congrats to Cassia McCaskill for being named a 2020-2021 All-American Honoree for Women’s Basketball! I am excited to see great things come from this remarkable young woman!”

McCaskill helped the OPSU team to its second Sooner Athletic Conference berth – in the past three seasons – in 2020-21. She was second team All-SAC, as well, this past season.

McCaskill averaged 20.3 points per game, which ranked 14th in the nation for the NAIA. McCaskill also ranked among the national leaders in: free throw percentage (25th/85.1%); three-point field goals made (42nd/2.54 per game), and; three-point field goal percentage (49th/39.8%).

McCaskill was a model of consistency for the Aggies, as she registered double-digit scoring games in 12 of 13 contests this year. She had a career high of 38 points on February 6 versus Southwestern Assemblies of God University, with five total games of 20-plus points.

“I am extremely proud of Cassia and it is well-deserved honor,” OPSU Head Women’s Basketball Coach Victor Esparza said. “She put in a lot of hard work in the off-season to get to this point. I can’t wait to see her take that next step in her career at Panhandle State.” **P**

/ ATHLETICS /

OPSU VOLLEYBALL SEES HISTORIC SEASON HEADING INTO THE SAC QUARTERFINALS



Oklahoma Panhandle State University Volleyball saw one of its most memorable seasons in history. Closing their season after a 3-2 loss to Wayland Baptist University in the Sooner Athletic Conference tournament quarterfinals.

While OPSU reached the SAC tourney for the third-consecutive season, the Aggies were the No-6 seed this year, after previously twice entering the event as the eighth seed. Panhandle also won a set for the first time in its SAC tournament participation versus the No.-3 seeded WBU squad. OPSU finished the shortened year with 10-7 record, the first Aggie volleyball team to earn double-digit wins since 1980.

Head Volleyball Coach, Julie Allen commented, “The team did a great job at continuing with the growth mindset, adaptation to the on-going changes of the season, and, stayed motivated and focused to make this year an unforgettable year. And, I believe they did a great job. Not only, did we get several SAC player of the week allocated this year, we competed in each match taking our top teams in the conference as a team, and, put together a great season record. And, truthfully I believe we as a team have just begun to know what we are able to accomplish together.”

“We were selected to come in 8th this year; and turned around and placed 6th. We earned a spot in the conference tournament; taking an opponent to 5 sets and finished up 6th in the conference. This year we only had one senior, so we will be returning the majority of the team and many of the new players were able to gain experience on the court, see the competition and know where we need to be to place higher.” She continued, “I am proud of each student-athletes commitment to the process to grow, team/family support, and, willingness to prepare each day to get better at the game of volleyball.” **P**



2020 & 2021 COMMENCEMENT

MAY 7 @ 10AM

ANCHOR D STADIUM

