

JUNE 2021

# **P***anhandle*

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY

**OPSU.edu**



**CELEBRATING THE  
2020 & 2021 GRADUATING  
CLASSES**



"I am excited to see our incoming Aggies on campus. This orientation will allow them to have the opportunity to get to know our faculty and staff before attending their first day of classes."

— Dr. Tim Faltyn,  
University President

/ C A M P U S /

## NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION TO BE HELD JULY 9 & AUGUST 6

Panhandle State will be hosting their New Student Orientation for their first in-person sessions since 2019. Admissions and Student Life have set July 9th and August 6th for incoming students to become more familiar with the campus.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn, said, "I am excited to see our incoming Aggies on campus. This orientation will allow them to have the opportunity to get to know our faculty and staff before attending their first day of classes."

New Student Orientation is designed to help students explore OPSU, meet professors, and develop relationships with their peers. The Admissions and Student Life offices have worked together to assist students in all areas. These departments will help ensure all students have identification cards, set up their Aggie Access, and all necessary steps needed for the first day of classes while getting to know everyone.

Director of Admissions, Sarah Wood, commented, "We look forward to having new students and their families on campus this summer and welcoming them to the Aggie Family."

Student Life Coordinator, Hannah Hammack, stated, "We are excited to host New Student Orientation in person this year and show the students and their families what it truly means to be an Aggie."

These events include sessions that will help future Aggies to succeed in the classroom and life. Along with the Student Orientation, OPSU will offer a Parent Orientation for the families of these students. **P**

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Dr. Brad Duren — Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

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#### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Natasha Eidson — Chyanna Black — Amanda Tidwell — Brittany Lee Way — Myra Mccaskill — Ronald Kelly — Brittney Smith



**CONGRATULATIONS  
GRADUATES!**



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**“History was made today at Panhandle State by celebrating both the 2020 & 2021 graduating classes at Commencement at Anchor D Stadium! Today was a day that we all needed. I am so inspired and excited to see these graduates pursue their futures!”**

— Dr. Tim Faltyn,  
University President

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**“Graduation at OPSU is one of the highlights of the year. Everyone is excited to celebrate the bright futures that lie ahead of these graduates. The past year has been full of challenges that were previously unimaginable, and the OPSU community got through it together.”**

— Mr. Jason Ramsey,  
CEO OSU/A&M Board of Regents

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**“You received a top-notch education, and you will be able to compete with anyone in the workforce. Be proud of yourselves! When you go out in the world, don’t box yourself into something that doesn’t give you joy.”**

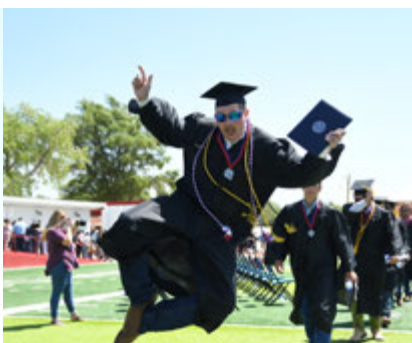
— Amada Alvidrez,  
Commencement Speaker & OPSU Alumna

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**GRADUATION PHOTOS  
CAN BE FOUND ON OUR  
FACEBOOK PAGE!**







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**“I have so much admiration and respect for these students and their willingness to constantly learn, not only at a high school level but also a collegiate level as well. We are excited to be able to be a part of such a life-changing program.”**

— Dr. Tim Faltyn,  
University President

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**“The success of this program would not have been possible without the flexibility and excellent learning experiences offered by our faculty. I’m proud of this program.”**

— Dr. Julie Dinger  
University Provost

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**“The ECHS program has been a joyous success. Partnering with our area high schools and providing students with such an opportunity places them in a greater position for future successes.”**

— Dr. Brad Duren  
University Associate Vice President of  
Academic Affairs

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/ CAMPUS /

## EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM AT PANHANDLE STATE

The Early College High School Program at Oklahoma Panhandle State University started in 2018. This program allows exceptionally prepared rising high school sophomore students the ability to begin college coursework on a path to finishing an associate's degree while they complete their high school diploma.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn, said, "I have so much admiration and respect for these students and their willingness to constantly learn, not only at a high school level but also a collegiate level as well. We are excited to be able to be a part of such a life-changing program."


The first schools to participate in the program were Guymon, Goodwell, and Hooker High Schools. The first class of ECHC students who began in the fall of 2018 just graduated this spring of 2021.

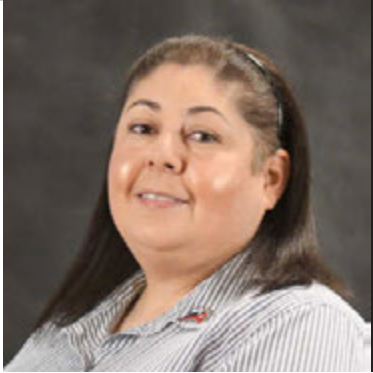
The graduates from Guymon High School were: Anna Bautista, Kendall Brown, Luke Bryan, Clayton Carter, Daisy Yasmin Chavez, Brett Fields, Yadira Gutierrez, Austin Jacobs, Julie Johnson, Estrella Tecum-Ramos, and Natalie Watson.

The graduates from Hooker High School were: The graduates from Hooker High School were: Cristal Hernandez, Ashley Jimenez, Halea Locke, Alexa Moreno, Karson Neville, and Mackenzie Ray.

Upon graduation, students attain an Associate of Science in General Studies with concentrations available in various areas, including Education, STEM, and Business fields.

Provost, Dr. Julie Dinger, commented, "The success of this program would not have been possible without the flexibility and excellent learning experiences offered by our faculty. I'm proud of this program."

Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Brad Duren, stated, "The ECHS program has been a joyous success. Partnering with our area high schools and providing students with such an opportunity places them in a greater position for future successes. It is a program that will certainly expand as we move forward. We are grateful to be part of the ECHS vision, and I look forward to a very bright future as OPSU continues to make a difference in the lives of area students and their families. That is what we are about!" 



/ STAFF /

## VALENTINA ALLEN

An Arrey, New Mexico native, Valentina Allen, came to Panhandle State because of the familiar environment of home. She took the new position as Director of the Hispanic Student Center, also known as El Centro.

Allen has pursued several degrees throughout her career, but most recently graduated with honors from Eastern Illinois University with a Master's in Cybersecurity. She has been able to utilize her skill sets to build El Centro into a place for all students to come to on campus.

Panhandle State has been a great fit for her family and knowing the importance of family and life balance. Her wife, Julie, accepted the Head Volleyball Coach position which brought them to Goodwell. Allen said, "Julie and I both believe that everyone should do what they love and work with people they enjoy being around. That was instantly obvious here at OPSU. Everyone accepted us with open arms and has been so supportive in every way. Growing up in the southwest, I'm familiar with the 'everyone is family' mentality, but OPSU just takes the trophy."

Allen has many favorite things about the university, but the administration's engagement is at the top of the list. She said, "I've never worked anywhere that you can be walking down the sidewalk and the CEO/President comes walking up to you and wants to talk about Jeeps. I've seen the Dean of Students offloading donated groceries from her car to ensure that our food pantry remains filled for students in need. Our administrators are at every single event on campus. You don't see that anywhere else."

If you can't find her busy on-campus teaching and advising groups, you'll find her off-roading in her Jeep with her wife and pets. One of the unique facts about her would be that she had a long career in the criminal justice field where she was a Special Agent and certified Sharp Shooter. **P**



/ STUDENT /

## EDUARDA SOUZA NUNES

Eduarda Souza just finished her junior at Panhandle State pursuing a Health and Physical Education major with a minor in Coaching and Business Administration. She is from the small town of Caucaia which is in the northeast part of Brazil.

Souza is a starter for Aggie's volleyball team where she played middle this past season. She said, "Panhandle caught my attention through the volleyball program. The coach was new and seemed to have the desire of changing the program and help it grow. OPSU also seemed to be more affordable compared to other institutions. Along with that, many people told me that teachers were always willing to help students, and especially student-athletes due to their crazy game routines during seasons."

As an international student-athlete, she has grown to develop great relationships all across campus. Souza commented, "I can tell that my relationship with my bosses, co-workers, coach, teammates, and professors is one of my favorite things. To have a good relationship with people who surrounds me throughout my daily routines brings me joy, and motivation to keep going and pursue my goals."

She has taken the opportunity to build her leadership through her position on the volleyball team. Souza assisted with ideas for practices and assist with communication between athletes and the coach.

Souza has always been one to be active and looking for an adrenaline rush through sports and activities. She grew up in a beach town so enjoys going roll skating, surfing, and a competitive swimmer. This bright young mind is a fluent speaker of Portuguese, English, and working on Spanish. Souza said, "Before coming to the US, I studied Tourism in a technical course. I am certified to work on travel agencies and hotels."

After graduating, Souza is not planning to go back to Brazil although she's unsure of her exact plan yet. She is looking at opportunities as a graduate assistant volleyball coach in the United States or playing volleyball overseas while learning another language. **P**



/ FACULTY /

## MEGAN STEELE

Megan Steele is a Nebraska native that pursued a career in Nursing which also brought the opportunity to teach at Panhandle State. She started as an adjunct professor and in the Fall of 2018 became a full-time Instructor for the RN to BSN Program.

Steele received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Panhandle State in 2012 and a Master of Science in Nursing Education from Northeastern State University. After obtaining her master's, she was exploring options when she came across the opportunity to teach in the adjunct position at OPSU.

Panhandle State was a great influence on not only her education but also how she would continue in her techniques of teaching. She said, "My OPSU professors had high standards and the classes were rigorous. These same professors were also very understanding when a family emergency occurred and worked with me on assignment due dates so I could still be successful. Because of my professors' knowledge, standards, and understanding that life happens, it sparked an interest in me to obtain my Master's degree to teach and help other nursing students."

Currently pursuing her doctorate in Nursing from the University of Texas Medical Branch, Steele can see the advantage a small university like OPSU can bring to students. Steele commented, "My favorite thing about OPSU is the dedication the staff and faculty have towards the students. Whether students are online or in person, every staff and faculty member strives to make their time with OPSU the best that it can be. This is a quality that is not seen or reciprocated at other universities."

When Steele is not focused on her dissertation, she is a part-time nurse at their kids' school. She and her husband, Matthew, have three children and are expecting twins in August. Steele has a passion for her community as well as teaching. In her spare time, she enjoys reading and engaging in American History and politics. She states, "When our children are grown, my dream is to serve our community or state in some political capacity." **P**



/ ALUMNI /

## MEAGAN GREESON

Meagan Greeson, Happy, Texas native, is the Vice President of the Panhandle State Association of Alumni and Friends. She graduated from Panhandle State with a degree in Accounting and minored in Business Administration. The current Gruver resident works at Brown, Graham & Company as a Tax Manager.

Greeson was recruited to play basketball for OPSU in 2012 after a successful career in junior college at Odessa College. She commented, "I can still remember the day of my recruiting visit to Goodwell. Walking around campus, I just knew it was home. I am so thankful for basketball bringing me to Panhandle State."

An athlete for OPSU, Greeson was a member of PBL and competed at Nationals both years. She finished in the top ten in Accounting Analysis and Decision Making at Nationals. Several memories include free lunches each week at the Methodist Student Center and BSM, daily jokes in Mr. Winger's Finance I class, and meeting her husband, Layne.

Greeson said, "I love to come back to campus for any event going on. It makes me so proud to see the growth happening each visit and to hear of all the wonderful things happening. I currently serve as the Vice President of the Alumni Association Board that allows me to come back to campus pretty frequently which I really enjoy. I love coming to Homecoming, PBL events, Aggie Connections, and of course catching a few basketball games if I can. The most recent event I really enjoyed was the Aggies in Amarillo event at Hodgetown featuring the Aggie baseball team. What a fun time."

When she's not busy working or attending alumni events, Greeson can be found running in 5k races. She enjoys running and is currently training for a half marathon for the Oklahoma City Memorial in October for the third year in a row. Meagan loves to support Gruver Greyhounds and Lady Hounds at their events with Layne and their dog Ella. **P**

# PANHANDLE STATE REFLECTS ON WHAT THE YEAR MEANT TO THEM



“A pandemic created a void of interaction and a separation within our student body. I had the privilege to begin hosting in person events on campus this last spring semester. The smiles that were seen and the support that was given to one another is why I love the job that I get to do.”

— Hannah Hammack,  
Student Life Coordinator

“It was a year of uncertainty and we all had to work together as a group to make this year great. Although some of our teams were not able to play a full season, every team had great success and growth. Eight out of our thirteen teams made the conference tournament and the support for each team was incredible.”

— Victor Esparza,  
Athletic Director

“Graduation was our chance to celebrate all of our students and their accomplishments over the past two years. The bilingual ceremony was new and exciting and meant that more of our students and their families could be included. It was the highlight of the semester to see everyone gathered for such a momentous occasion!”

— Amber Glass,  
Dean of Student Services

“As an individual, as an organization, and as a community we’ve faced so much from a pandemic, tragic losses and so much more. These things brought us together, making us stronger and I’ve never been more proud to be part of something.”

— Sarah Wood,  
Director of Admissions

“The beginning of the school year brought challenges in the classroom as we adapted to the pandemic and tried to keep classes as close to normal as possible. This year helped us become more flexible, empathetic, adaptable, and creative.”

— Tito Aznar,  
Instructor of English

“We were faced with many challenges, of many different types. In the future when I look back on this year, I will always remember how we adapted and came together to make it through some tough times. Will always be thankful for the support of the faculty and staff, and especially the students.”

— Sydney Wilkinson,  
Instructor of Animal Science

“This past year had challenges we never could have imagined. I’m very proud of both the faculty and students of the College of Business and Technology. At times it was a real grind, but our students and faculty never quit. The university was flexible and adapted to every obstacle”

— Davin Winger,  
Dean of College of Business & Technology

“I witnessed again and again students, faculty, and staff experience expressions of kindness and caring for one another as we worked through a year that presented an extremely diverse set of challenges. I know without a doubt that I am honored to have a great job in a wonderful place like Panhandle State..”

— Shawn Tucker,  
Dean of College of Agriculture, Science & Nursing

/ STAFF /

## DR. RYAN BLANTON TO SERVE ON THE AUTISM FOUNDATION OF OKLAHOMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Oklahoma Panhandle State University's Vice President of Operations, Dr. Ryan Blanton, has been selected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Autism Foundation of Oklahoma.

The Autism Foundation of Oklahoma is a non-profit organization to support the Oklahoma Autism Center and other initiatives that improve the quality of life for Oklahomans with autism and their families. The Foundation's programs provide education, advocacy, professional development, technical assistance, and family support for Oklahoma's autism community and their families.

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "Dr. Blanton has worked hard not only in higher education for the last 18 years but also in health care for the State of Oklahoma. I am inspired by his drive and motivation to improve these industries while serving on the Board of the Autism Foundation of Oklahoma."

Previous to Panhandle State, Blanton was the Associate Vice President for External Affairs at Connors State College. He also served as the Southeastern Oklahoma Regional Outreach Coordinator for the Oklahoma Health Care Authority and as a Research Assistant at the American Indian Diabetes Prevention Center and the Center for Health Ethics, Research, and Policy at the University of Oklahoma.

A third-generation veteran who served in the Field Artillery of the U.S. Army, Blanton went on to earn a BA, MA, and Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Oklahoma specializing in medical and sociolinguistic anthropology and rural health disparities. He also served for seven years on the boards of two Federally Qualified Health Centers serving residents of rural southeast and northwest Oklahoma.

Blanton commented, "I am honored to serve on the Autism Foundation of Oklahoma Board. I have a passion for working to improve access to healthcare and education for all Oklahomans and ensuring that everyone has access to resources to live their lives to the fullest." **P**



/ DIVERSITY & INCLUSION /

## OPSU STUDENTS TELL THEIR STORIES

Manuel Medina was interested in Panhandle State through the Upward Bound program and concurrent classes. As a Guymon native, OPSU was a familiar choice where he could be close to home. He plans to graduate in the Fall of 2022, double majoring in Computer Information Systems and Marketing.

Medina has a passion for advocating for the diversity at Panhandle State and bringing more awareness and tolerance to campus. He is an officer for the Hispanic American Leadership Organization and Pride & Allies League. Through his leadership as an officer and working at El Centro, he can help plan activities and events he is passionate about.

June is recognized as Pride month, and is very important to Medina. He said, "The biggest challenge I have faced is acceptance anxiety. I have always been 'weird' and 'different,' which can be daunting at times. I had an anxiety attack because I wasn't sure how being a queer person of color was going to affect my experience at OPSU."

Medina commented, "In my time at Panhandle State, there have been small steps taken to make the campus more tolerant to minorities, and I am proud to be a part of those steps working through some of the pushback." **P**

# YEAR IN REVIEW FOR AGGIE ATHLETICS

## SHOOTING SPORTS

The Shooting Sports team led the sporting clay event for their first-ever shooting sports event. They finished third in the Men's Overall. They placed 9th in American Skeet, 9th in American Trap, 5th in Sporting Clays, and 10th in Super Sporting. Two students placed 1st and 2nd at the ACUI Clay Targets Event in Men's American Trap. **P**



## RODEO

The Men's and Women's Rodeo teams competed at many arenas nine straight weekends on the road. The Men's team won the Central Plains region for the year and secured their spots to Casper. We had 5 men place in the top 3 in their respective events individually. One student-athlete earned a spot at the CNFR after finishing 4th due to a competitor being injured, and a freshman was chosen to represent the final spot for the Men's team. One student-athlete secured a spot in the breakaway for the Women's Rodeo Team. The team will have seven men and one woman going to the College National Finals Rodeo in June to represent OPSU. **P**

## VOLLEYBALL

The Volleyball team concluded the fall season with a record 5-1. The Aggies defeated Southwestern Assemblies of God University for the first time in program history. In the spring, the Aggies went 5-5, producing an overall record of 10-6, heading into the Sooner Athletic Conference Championship Tournament. Volleyball earned their way to the conference tournament for the third year in a row, placing 6th overall. The team ranks 6th in the nation for blocks per set and 37th for the total amount of blocks. **P**



## FOOTBALL

The Football team placed 4th in the Sooner Athletic Conference this year. It is because the team showed a lot of grit, heart and, determination. The Aggies had over 9 players receive SAC All-Conference awards. Also, three Aggies received honorable mention awards for the SAC conference. **P**



## MEN'S SOCCER

The Men's Soccer team had another great year. They went 4-8-5 this season. They were 2-for-2 in earning a post season playoff spot. They qualified for the Sooner Athletic Conference Championship Tournament, a second time in the program's history. The team had two players who earned recognition on the All-SAC Awards. **P**



## SOFTBALL

The Softball team had an eight consecutive winning streak. They concluded their season by winning 14 and losing 6. The team secured their spot in the Sooner Athletic Conference tournament for the third year in a row, and five athletes received honors for the All-SAC. **P**

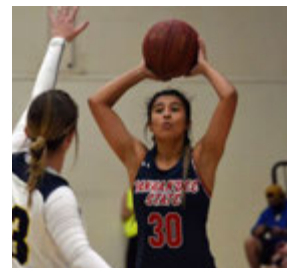


## BASEBALL

The Baseball team not only beat two nationally-ranked opponents this season, Tabor & Our Lady of the Lake University, but they punched their ticket to the Sooner Athletic Conference Tournament. The team received two honors this year at the All-SAC. They have also participated in several community service activities while qualifying for the SAC tournament. **P**

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Women's Basketball team had a productive season. A winning game at home secured the Aggies a spot in the Sooner Athletic Conference Championship Tournament. **P**

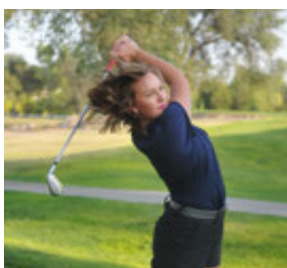
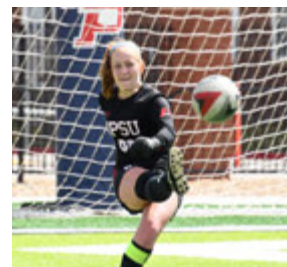


## MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Men's Basketball ended this year with four national rankings. #16 in the country for turnover margin, #12 in the nation in offensive rebounds per game, #7 in the nation in steals per game, and #1 in the country at college basketball in turnovers forced per game. One athlete was recognized for post-season honors from the SAC. The team also secured a spot at the SAC tournament. **P**

## WOMEN'S SOCCER

The 2020 spring season, if anything, shows that this group of young women have a tremendous amount of grit and resilience. This group pulled together to become closer as a team and have grown more as a family. This team is only beginning to scratch the surface of greatness. **P**

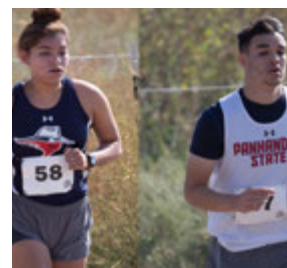


## GOLF

The Men's & Women's Golf teams had a great season. Both teams went to the Sooner Athletic Conference Tournament of Champions. The Women's team secured the 5th place spot in the Championship. **P**

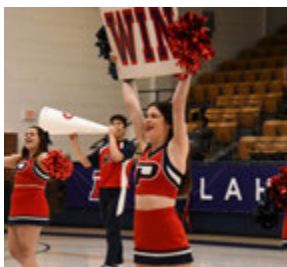
## CROSS COUNTRY

The Cross-Country team had a shortened season this year and were only able to participate in two meets. They competed in the West Texas Buffalo Stampede and the Southwestern College Mid-States Classic. At the Mid-States Classic in Winfield, Kansas, the Aggie Men's team placed 14th. **P**



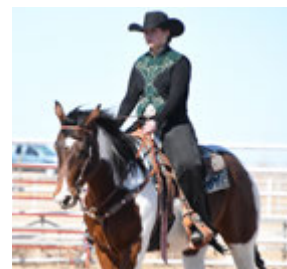
## COMPETITIVE CHEER

The Cheer team was out in force this year as they cheered and supported multiple sports teams. The Cheer team was not only seen supporting their Aggies at home but also on the road. **P**



## EQUESTRIAN

The Equestrian team could not compete for points or the possibility of nationals at the end of the season this year. The team members still showed up throughout the year. With learning to navigate the online show system and it being the first time at an in-person show for some, we came out on the top half. **P**







/ATHLETICS/

## PANHANDLE STATE SOFTBALL FIELD TO BE NAMED AFTER JIM QUIMBY

The Oklahoma Panhandle State University softball field will be named in honor of longtime supporter and friend of Aggie Athletics, Jim Quimby, it has been announced by University President Dr. Tim Faltyn. For decades the field has simply gone by the generic moniker Aggie Field, and we are elated to announce the renaming.

"I am pleased to announce that our softball field will be named Jim Quimby Field in honor of our great friend," Dr. Faltyn said. "Jim has been a strong supporter and advocate for not just Aggie Athletics, but for our entire University and community."


The naming of the softball field after Quimby is the continuation of a four-phase project to renovate the baseball and softball facilities. Phase 2 of the plan will include a shared-use Complex between the current baseball and softball areas, with indoor cages, offices, concession area, locker rooms, umpire rooms and restroom facilities. Phase 3 involves the installation of turf on both fields, with Phase 4 providing stadium lights.

Earlier this month, the OPSU baseball field was officially named Carroll Gribble Field – or "The Grib" – in honor of the former Aggie athlete, coach, and administrator at Panhandle State.

"Jim Quimby is the ideal name – and person – to have represented at our softball facility," OPSU Director of Athletics Victor Esparza said. "Jim is known throughout our campus – and local – community for his philanthropy and willingness to help. We here at Panhandle State have benefitted from Jim's support of Aggie Athletics and we are incredibly grateful."

"I hope that anyone who has been touched by Jim's generosity in the past will consider a gift to the Jim Quimby Field project, as we now show our appreciation to him."

Quimby graduated from Panhandle State in 1976, earning his Bachelor of Science majoring in Animal Science and Production and minoring in Natural Science. Quimby was installed as a Lifetime Member of the OPSU Alumni Association in 2017. He is currently the Senior Vice President at Bank of the Panhandle.

Those interested in contributing in honor of Jim Quimby should contact Esparza at [coachvic@opsu.edu](mailto:coachvic@opsu.edu) or by calling (580 )349-1324. Donations may also be done on-line 



/ATHLETICS/

## AGGIES SECURE THEIR SPOTS TO THE CNFR IN JUNE

Oklahoma Panhandle State University had some tough luck at Colby Community College rodeo both teams placing sixth this weekend. Although, the weekend wasn't the best the Aggies have had, they were able to come out on top for the year.

As the dust settled Sunday, the Aggies patiently waited for the points to be finalized for the year-end results. Panhandle State won the Central Plains Region Men's Team for the year with a total of 3669.8-points total for the nine rodeos, and several CNFR individual qualifiers.

Senior, Jade Taton, was named the Central Plains Region Men's All-Around as well as the Bareback Riding Champion. Junior/Senior duo, Wyatt Murray and Whitt Crozier, ended the year as Reserve Champion Header and Heeler in the Team Roping which gives them a spot in the CNFR.

Seniors, Sam Goings and Cooper Thatcher, were able to secure their CNFR spots each placing third for the year in their respective events. Goings will represent the Aggies in the Steer Wrestling, and Thatcher in the Saddle Bronc Riding. Junior, TJ Schmidt, will compete in the Bull Riding after finishing fourth for the year end, due to the competitor above him was injured and unable to compete. Freshma, Cooper Slavin, was selected to represent the men's rodeo team from the final points position.

The women's team will also be represented in Casper by lone ranger, Hope Luttrell. Luttrell ended the year as the Reserve Champion in the Breakaway Roping.

Aggies will take a much needed break to get ready for the College National Finals Rodeo in June. The CNFR will be held in Casper, Wyoming June 13th-19th. Panhandle State looks forward to watching the Aggies compete next month at the CNFR. **P**

/ATHLETICS/

## AGGIES REINSTATE TRACK & FIELD AS A SPORT IN 2021-22



Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU) has announced that – beginning with the 2021-22 school year – the sport of Track and Field will be returning for NAIA intercollegiate competition at OPSU. The addition of track and field will boost the Aggies' sport offerings by four, with teams for men and women, competing in both the NAIA indoor and outdoor track and field championship seasons. Track and Field will bring Panhandle State's total intercollegiate athletic programs up to 17 NAIA championship-sponsored sports.

"It is with great pleasure that I am able to announce the reinstatement of track and field at Panhandle State," OPSU President Dr. Tim Faltyn said. "We look forward to these new athletes competing on behalf of our University and our track and field alumni."

OPSU Director of Athletics Victor Esparza recognizes the chance to enrich the Aggie athletics program and support the University's mission by providing diverse opportunities for student-athletes locally and throughout the region. Esparza believes that having a track and field program will add another dimension to the Aggies' intercollegiate programs.

"Track and Field is an intercollegiate sport that appeals to a wide variety of student-athletes," Esparza explained. "There is literally something for every athlete, depending on your particular skill set. Speed. Endurance. Strength. Jumping. Track and field offers a great venue for athletes who want to concentrate on that sport alone, or as a second sport in which to participate for our current student-athletes, as well. In that regard, track and field can be a great asset in recruiting for our other sports and open up new opportunities for those who want to specialize in track and field, while furthering their education."

Panhandle State's ability to bring back Track and Field would not have been possible, were it not for its great partnership and working relationship with the Guymon Public Schools. Since OPSU no longer has its own track and field facilities and equipment, it will be guests on Guymon's facilities as the program resumes and grows.

The last time that a competitor represented the Aggies in track and field was during the spring of 1991, with the sport being discontinued at Panhandle State shortly thereafter. And now, after what will be a 31-year hiatus, the Red & Blue will bring the sport back to Goodwell and the region. **P**

