

OCTOBER 2022

# Panhandle

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**BEST COLLEGES**  
U.S. News & World Report  
REGIONAL COLLEGES WEST  
2022-2023  
**#17**

**BEST COLLEGES**  
U.S. News & World Report  
BEST VALUE SCHOOLS  
2022-2023  
**#3**

**BEST COLLEGES**  
U.S. News & World Report  
REGIONAL COLLEGES PUBLIC  
2022-2023  
**#8**



# P

**BEST IN THE WEST**



/UNIVERSITY/

## U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT RANKS PANHANDLE STATE AMONGST HIGHEST OPPORTUNITY SEEKING COLEGES

There is a long list of reasons students choose Panhandle State for their dreams of a higher education. Low student to teacher ratio, more than 35 degree plans, designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution, many athletic opportunities, but affordability is one of the top attractions for students attending Panhandle State.

For the first time, Panhandle State has been recognized as a Top College for Least Student Loan Debt by U.S. News & World Report Best College Rankings.

“The announcement confirms what most people know about Panhandle State,” remarks Erin Moore, Director of Financial Aid. “We continue to be the clear choice for an affordable and quality education in the region.”

With many opportunities for scholarships, both athletic and academic, many students find the task of financing their education at Panhandle State an easy puzzle to solve. From the Panhandle Promise scholarship for those choosing to enter the field of education in the Panhandle region, athletic scholarships, to the hundreds of scholarships available through the Panhandle State Foundation, many students find themselves with excellent financial aid packages to help them realize their dream of the affordable education at Panhandle State.

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger stated, “Our number one goal is to help students realize their dream of a college education. I’m grateful to U.S. News for recognizing the importance of removing the financial barriers of accessing a college degree with this ranking.”

With careful planning to utilize all options available to students such as academic scholarships from the university, Panhandle State Foundation’s scholarships, and outside sources such as civic clubs and churches, coupled with federal aid and grants, students can develop robust options to help pay for the cost of their education.

“We work diligently to keep costs down without sacrifice to the student experience,” stated Liz McMurphy, Vice President of Fiscal Affairs. “We believe students will continue to choose Panhandle State because of the opportunities offered.” **P**

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OKLAHOMA  
**PANHANDLE STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 430 Goodwell, OK 73939

Tel: 580-349-2611 / Toll Free: 1-800-664-OPSU

Fax: 580-349-2302



**@wearepanhandle**

#### ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Julie Dinger — President  
Dr. Theresa Billiot — Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs  
Dr. Ryan Blanton — Vice President of Advancement  
Liz McMurphy — Vice President of Fiscal Affairs

#### PANHANDLE MAGAZINE

Natasha Eidson — Director of Communications  
Chyanna Black — Executive Director of Panhandle State Foundation  
Abigail Rogers — Student Assistant  
Kyrstan Cook — Student Assistant

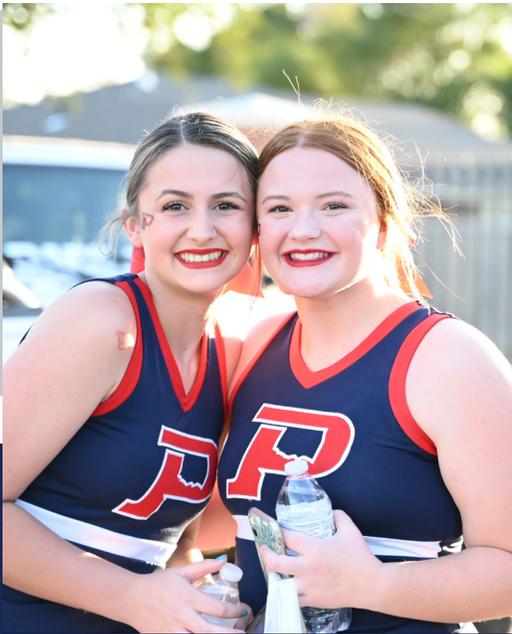
#### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Natasha Eidson — Abigail Rogers — Veronica Ray — Kyrstan Cook  
— Lesly Galarza

/ CAMPUS /

# HAIL THE AGGIES

## HOMECOMING WITH A VICTORY







“We are panhandle proud to be the first Hispanic Serving Institution in the state of Oklahoma and will always strive to set the standard of excellence.”

— Dr. Julie Dinger,  
University President

/ DIVERSITY & INCLUSION /

## PANHANDLE STATE CELEBRATES HSI WEEK AND HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

National Hispanic Heritage month is recognized from September 15 to October 15, which celebrates the history, culture, and impact of Hispanic individuals.

Additionally, there are many Latin American, Central American, and South American countries that celebrate their independence days during this time period.

The OPSU Hispanic Student Center Administrative Assistant, Maria Groves Cervantes, explains the importance of Hispanic Heritage Month, “Hispanic Heritage Month is very important to the majority of our OPSU students. As a Hispanic Latina it is such an extraordinary feeling to see everyone come together as a family to educate and include our community in the cultural events we organize.”

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger commented, “We are panhandle proud to be the first Hispanic Serving Institution in the state of Oklahoma and will always strive to set the standard of excellence.”

OPSU was Oklahoma’s first established Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) through the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). September 12-18 was HSI week and Cervantes explains OPSU’s activities for the week, “HSI week gave us an opportunity to host our first ever HSI Week Summit: La Fiesta.” La Fiesta was an event that all students at OPSU, the community, and even other HSIs attended. The event was celebrated with guest speakers discussing the importance and opportunities of Hispanic Serving Institutions, dinner, drawings for prizes were done, and the night ended with a dance party or baile.

Cervantes describes the importance of OPSU being a Hispanic Serving Institution for students, “As an HSI we are able to give our Hispanic students the necessary tools and resources to be successful throughout their academic career.” Thanks to the efforts of Maria Groves Cervantes, Dean of Student Affairs Valentina Allen, Vice President Dr. Ryan Blanton, and President Dr. Julie Dinger, OPSU can continue to offer a growing community that supports Hispanic students and their academic endeavors. **P**

“Shawn is a great asset to the Advancement team. I look forward to working with him on initiatives not only within the Alumni Association, but also within our community.”

— Dr. Ryan Blanton,  
Vice President of Advancement



/UNIVERSITY/

## PANHANDLE STATE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NAMES NEW DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

The Panhandle State Alumni Association has named Shawn Joy the Director of Alumni Relations. Joy is no stranger to Panhandle State as he serves as the Head Baseball Coach and the Assistant Athletic Director. Joy will continue both of these roles moving into the Alumni Association. Joy is taking over this new role after the previous Director, Chyanna Black, was named the Executive Director of the Foundation.

Originally from Topeka, Kansas, Joy and his wife Maegan moved to Goodwell in 2019. With three successful coaching seasons, Joy has built a program that serves the community and engages in campus life and alumni. He plans to continue his outreach efforts while in the Alumni Association and find ways to connect with alumni that has not already been done.

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger commented, “Shawn Joy is the best person to continue the momentum of progress in the Alumni Association. I am confident that Shawn’s exceptional skills and dedication to the alumni of OPSU will take alumni engagement to new heights.”

Joy received a Bachelor of Science in Recreation Management from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He is currently working on a Masters from East Central University and will complete the program in December.

Interim President of the Alumni Association Board, Katie Quebedeaux stated, “Shawn has been an active part of OPSU for many years. His enthusiasm and excitement for our Aggie Family is unmatched and the future of the OPSU Alumni & Friends is bright with Shawn as our Executive Director. I look forward to his innovative ideas as we move forward in continued excellence!”

As the new Director of Alumni Relations, Joy hopes to spread his enthusiasm for campus and community involvement from students to alumni. Joy states, “I’m excited and grateful for this opportunity. We want our Aggie Alums to be proud and engaged. We have a great alumni base and we’re going to showcase that.” **P**



/ STAFF /

## KAREN BAUER

Karen Bauer is the newest addition to the Business Office team at Panhandle State as she takes on a new role as the Purchasing Coordinator. Before this position, Bauer was the Assistant Director of Financial Aid.

An Oklahoma native, Bauer is originally from Enid but moved to Guymon in 2003 where her husband, Eric, could help run his family business, Naifeh's Steak House. Bauer commented, "We stayed because we love the amazing people in our community."

The family atmosphere and sense of belonging have attracted Bauer to all that Panhandle State has to offer, along with how everyone is always willing to lend a hand. In 2008, Bauer earned an honored Bachelor of Science in Biology from OPSU. "I knew I always wanted to work at OPSU. In 2020 a job opening in the Financial Aid department became available, and I sensed immediately it would be a position I would enjoy," she stated.

Director of Financial Aid, Erin Moore states "Karen's work ethic and devotion to Panhandle State are admirable. She has a wonderful attitude and is always willing to step up and assist students, staff, or faculty to help make Panhandle State all that it is."

"Karen has recently assumed a new position in the Business Office, and we are very excited to have her join the team. I'm looking forward to seeing her advance in her role as Purchasing Coordinator." was expressed by Liz McMurphy, Vice President of Fiscal Affairs.

When Bauer is not at Panhandle State, she enjoys time with her husband, Eric, and their three sons, Zeke, Miles, and Murphy. When the family is not playing games or enjoying a delicious homemade meal, Bauer enjoys decorating for each holiday and season. **P**



/ STUDENT /

## JAYDEN VALDEZ

Senior Jayden Valdez believed that OPSU would be a great place to learn more about technology and prepare for a future career as an information technology professional. Valdez is set to graduate in May of 2023, majoring in Computer Information Systems with a minor in Business Administration. He is a third-generation Panhandle State student.

"My favorite thing about Panhandle so far is the community on campus. The community on campus has given me many great opportunities. My involvement on campus and in various organizations has given me great opportunities and valuable experiences," Valdez stated.

Valdez is an active member of FTP (Future Technology Professionals), PBL (Panhandle Business Leaders), HALO (Hispanic American Leadership Organization), and SGA (Student Government Association). He is the President of FTP and PBL and is the justice for the SGA. "Panhandle has allowed me to venture out of my comfort zone and grow as a person and a leader. I will be forever grateful for the opportunities I have been given," said Valdez.

While at the 2022 National Leadership Conference for PBL this past summer, Valdez earned 3rd place in Cyber Security and 4th place in Network Design. He enjoys building computers and researching new topics in the world of technology. He recently started his own business and is self-studying app development to release his applications in the future.

Valdez is an active eagle scout who enjoys camping, fishing, and anything outdoors. He also enjoys cooking and bike riding.

After graduation, Valdez plans to continue working on his business and enter the computer industry as an information technology professional. He is also interested in pursuing a career in cyber security while working in application development. **P**



/ FACULTY /

## HELEN THRALL

With a published music album under her belt, Dr. Helen Thrall is one of a kind and a true asset to Panhandle State University. At Panhandle State, Dr. Thrall serves as an Assistant Professor of Music, the Music Department Chair, a Piano Instructor, a Theory Instructor and an Accompanist.

Thrall stated, "My favorite thing about OPSU must be the spirit of this college. There is a strong sense of community and support between staff, teachers, and students. Being part of this institution inspires me to give my best to my students. Every day I am motivated to help students reach their goals and become better musicians and music educators."

Born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Thrall has an array of musical education in her background. She received a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music in 2013, and then went on to obtain her Masters of Music in Piano Performance. In 2018 she earned a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Piano Performance from the University of Iowa.

The music album published this summer is a dedication to composer Juan Francisco García, a Dominican composer, and was released in June on Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music. Juan Francisco García was a prominent figure in the classical music scene of the Dominican Republic during the first half of the twentieth century. As a pioneer who fostered the nationalistic musical movement in the Dominican Republic, García sought to create compositions that sounded authentically Dominican. The 21 piano pieces in this album reflect that. They are beautiful, expressive, and short compositions that exhibit unique melodies and attractive rhythmic qualities.

When Thrall is not attending to her duties at Panhandle State, she enjoys traveling and visiting new places. Her favorite place to visit right now is her home country, the Dominican Republic. Growing up there, she never realized how beautiful and colorful it can be. Every time she visits there, she takes the time to go and explore different towns of the beautiful island. **P**



/ ALUMNI /

## JESSICA REED

Jessica Reed grew up in Plains, Kansas, and graduated from Panhandle State University in 2014. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness with a minor in Animal Science. Before transferring to OPSU, Jessica attended Hutchison Community College.

Reed lives on her family's cattle ranch assisting to run it while transitioning into the role as Director of Operations at First Security Bank in Beaver, OK. She is extremely excited to be back in the small town atmosphere and in a position that she gives her the ability to give back to her community.

The small-town atmosphere that OPSU offered is what she loved and drew her as a student. "I'm a small-town kid so still getting that at college made OPSU feel like home," she commented. During her time at Panhandle State, Jessica competed for the Ranch Horse and Equestrian team.

When asked about her favorite memory of her time on campus she said, "My roommate Callie and I painted up for homecoming one year and had a blast cheering on the football team that game. Of course going to wing Wednesday after night class was a tradition as well."

Reed was raised in Red and Blue. Her mother, Lynnetta, was an OPSU alum who played for the Women's Basketball team the first year that the program started. Jessica recently moved back to the panhandle area and is excited to be participating in events and raising future aggies.

When Jessica is not busy with the ranch or the bank, she enjoys traveling, riding horses, and being outside. Jessica is married to Tate and they have 2 children together, Rocelyn and Marshall. The family will be welcoming another child in December.

Fun fact about Jessica is that she is an avid runner that consistently participates in half marathons, trail races and has completed one marathon. **P**



“Our Rodeo team consistently puts Panhandle State on the map with their achievements in the arena and in the classroom. I am proud of their hard work and dedication to make Panhandle State the best.”

— Dr. Julie Dinger,  
University President

/UNIVERSITY/

## PANHANDLE STATE RODEO MAKES HISTORY FOR FALL ENROLLMENT

Students, Faculty, and Staff have all hit the ground running this Fall semester at Oklahoma Panhandle State University. With classes in full swing for the 1st 8-week courses and the start of the 16-week courses, it feels like a new era at Panhandle State.

The OPSU family is excited to announce the largest rodeo recruiting class, and the largest freshman class of student athletes in the last four years. This achievement came after the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association announced Head Women’s Coach, Shelbie Rose, as the Faculty Director for the region for the next two years, and Senior, Tatum Hall, was announced the Student Director for the region for the next year. Tatum will be responsible for the finances of the region and make sure the national sponsors are represented at all of the regional rodeos. In this role, she will also serve as the voice for the entire student body for the Central Plains Region.

University President Dr. Julie Dinger commented, “Our Rodeo team consistently puts Panhandle State on the map with their achievements in the arena and in the classroom. I am proud of their hard work and dedication to make Panhandle State the best.”

Shelbie Rose stated, “This is the most recruits we have gained at one time since I have been a part of the coaching staff. It is exciting to have so many new faces on our team. Our team this year is made up of close to half new and half returning student athletes. I am looking forward to the upcoming season and getting to know all our new team members better.” 

“I am so proud of the hard work that Dr. Lewis put into earning this degree as well as continuing to help grow the College of Arts and Education at Panhandle State. Her dedication to continuing education is something I admire.”

— Dr. Julie Dinger,  
University President



/ FACULTY /

## DEAN LEWIS SEES THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Education at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Dr. Charla Lewis recently earned a Doctorate of Education from Bradley University with an emphasis on “Educational Leadership in Higher Education”. Lewis believes in continuing one’s education for their entire life by doing things like reading books, watching documentaries, taking classes, and listening or observing people’s experiences. She overcame many obstacles in order to obtain this degree.

“I toyed with the idea of getting my doctorate off and on throughout my life,” Lewis stated. “No one in my family had ever earned one before. I finally decided to take the plunge in the summer of 2020. I had some trepidation because of COVID, but I decided to give it a shot anyway.”

Lewis has served at Panhandle State since 2013. Her roles include the Department Chair of Music, Director of Instrumental Music, Director of Music Education, and Assistant Professor. Lewis is also on the faculty advisory council for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Lewis completed 48 semester hours in 39 weeks while the program focused on two main aspects, diversity and social justice. She completed an internship within the program during the spring and summer of 2022.

“Dr. Dinger served as my university supervisor and I really learned a lot from her. There was quite a lot of change going on at this time at OPSU and in Dr. Dinger’s life. I’m so glad she stuck with me through her transition to President,” said Lewis.

Her internship experience also led to many projects, one of which will affect area public schools. “I applied for a Foundational Enhancement Grant through OSRHE for \$8,000 to implement a new band director induction program for the Panhandle area public schools. I was notified unofficially that my application was approved. I should receive official notice after the September Regents meeting. I’m excited to start working on this project.”

Lewis is thankful to the individuals who encouraged her to succeed, including her parents, husband, daughter, classmates, and colleagues. “It’s a hard thing to work full-time and go to school at the same time, so it’s important to have that support system,” stated Lewis. **P**



"She is a shining example of what an OPSU nurse is!"

- Kristy Calloway, Director of Nursing

/STUDENT/

## PROVING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE **PANHANDLE PROUD**

Nursing student **Kaylun Peters** proved what it means to be **Panhandle Proud**. Peters currently works at The Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health where she is a part of the neonatal transport services team. After Hurricane Ian swept through Florida, Peters' team took action. The team's goal is to assist in evacuating NICU babies from area hospitals. The team then splits into three separate teams, joining other flight teams from Arkansas and Mississippi to form three cohesive flight teams that would be able to transport any type of patient. While in Florida, the Peters helped relocate patients across the state, we helped replenish supplies, and even empty trash. She was willing to do anything that she could do to help.

Kaylun shared, "Being from Oklahoma, I know firsthand what it is like to be in the middle of a disaster and need help from others. My parents raised me to be the type of person who always helps others in need if at all possible. I became a nurse to help others, it's just who we are, we are the helpers. It was an incredibly emotional and humbling experience to see the people who just lost everything also still willing to help others who needed it. I am thankful for the opportunity and believe I have grown as a person and as a nurse due to the experience."

The team was requested because they are one of the few neonatal transport teams in the nation. They are estimated to evacuate up to 75 critically ill and pre-term babies to other hospitals in Florida or nearby states, depending on access.

"We feel very fortunate to possess the skills that are needed to be able to help these babies in their time of need. When we received the call to help it was a never question of IF we were going. It was how fast can we safely get there to get to work evacuating the babies in need," said Kaylun Peters

Director of Nursing, Kristy Calloway shared, "Like almost all of our OPSU students, Kaylun is not only a student but also a working nurse. We understand and encourage the kind of commitment to nursing that Kaylun has shown by volunteering to serve the people of Florida who suffered the devastation of Hurricane Ian. She is a shining example of what an OPSU nurse is!"

Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Theresa Billiot commented, "We are extremely proud of Kaylun Peters. Her dedication to her profession and our communities show that she is an admirable person who works selflessly each day to serve the public. OPSU is inspired by Kaylun's genuine compassion, constant attention, and quick reaction to help those in need." **P**

“I am beyond grateful to be able to offer these resources to our community.”

— Valentina Allen



/UNIVERSITY/

## PANHANDLE STATE RECEIVES GRANT FUNDING THROUGH ODMHSAS

Oklahoma Panhandle State University secured a multi-year grant with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to assist OPSU with stimulant and opioid awareness and prevention measures. Through this grant, OPSU students, faculty, staff, and our community will have access to a Certified Prevention Specialist, counseling services, consultations, and resources that help combat the abuse and addiction of stimulants and opioids.

Panhandle State has staffed one full-time Higher Education Prevention Services (HEPS) Grant Coordinator and one student-worker to assist with facilitating this program. Virginia Cruz, an OPSU Alumna, brings nearly four years of prevention and education experience in the region. Cruz holds a Master of Science degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and is a certified Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Specialist.

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger stated, “This grant will allow an opportunity for our campus and community to get and stay educated on mental health and substance abuse and the importance of bringing awareness to our students and employees. I believe Virginia is the best person to help us fulfill our requirements in this grant to meet the needs of our students, employees, and community.”

Cruz will host multiple training seminars each semester to help educate members of our OPSU community on the dangers of using stimulants and opioids. These seminars will also include the offer of services to assist anyone who may be experiencing signs of addiction and abuse. Additional educational opportunities will be offered to students, faculty, and staff to help identify and report signs of stimulant and opioid addiction and abuse.

Valentina Allen, Dean of Student Affairs stated, “This program will engage mental health professionals at every stage of the process. This epidemic has rocked our country and we can’t forget about rural communities like Goodwell.”

Virginia Cruz, Project Coordinator stated, “I am honored to be a part of providing higher education prevention services to OPSU and the surrounding community. This program will bring awareness to the importance of putting preventative measures in place and providing mental health interventions to help individuals enjoy life without the weight of addiction. **P**



/UNIVERSITY/

## PANHANDLE PROUD FOR HOMECOMING WEEK

Homecoming week for OPSU is a constant buzz of fun activities and celebration not just for the college campus, but for the community as a whole. Homecoming Week 2022 was no exception, and the overall participation in campus events was admirable.

“The OPSU homecoming tradition goes beyond us coming together to show our school spirit at a football game. Rather, our homecoming provides weeklong enriched activities to engage our students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community partners to engage in our personable OPSU experience. We focus on stimulating and elevating love for OPSU by developing a sense of belonging, unity, and pride through our diverse and inclusive culture, while also showcasing our university improvements that lead to student success,” says Dr. Theresa Billiot, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

OPSU’s student life made sure to have a wealth of opportunities for interaction between students, faculty, and the community. These activities began on Monday September 26 with a tie-dye T-shirt event on Monday night, a glow party on Tuesday night, painting maracas and the men’s and women’s soccer game on Wednesday, food trucks and the pregame bonfire on Thursday, a volleyball game and introduction of the homecoming court on Friday, and a full day’s worth of activities on Saturday’s game day alone.

Game Day was filled with activities throughout campus for everyone to enjoy. It started with another volleyball game, the OPSU parade, the pregame tailgate, and the football game itself. Many alumni came back to campus with an overwhelming sense of pride and excitement to take part in the activities and cheer their Aggie teams to victory.

Alumni Director and Baseball Coach Shawn Joy reflects, “Aggie Nation came out big time for Homecoming this year. Aggie alums from all over the country were on campus and having fun. It was a great time and we are grateful for everyone who came out.” With this charge of energy by alumni, the community, peers, and staff both volleyball and football took Homecoming Day wins to perfectly package an end to a wonderful week.

Athletic Director Victor Esparza comments on the homecoming atmosphere throughout the week, “Homecoming week was a success. All week long we had such great student participation which made the weekend even better. I am proud of our teams making it a memorable weekend.” **P**

“I am excited to welcome the Petersons as an Honored Family of the Alumni Association. The Peterson Family are a model of service and commitment to Panhandle State and our region.”

— Dr. Julie Dinger,  
University President



/ ALUMNI /

## THE PETERSON FAMILY 2022 ALUMNI HONORED FAMILY

The Panhandle State Association of Alumni and Friends announced the selection of the 2022 Honored Family, the Peterson Family. They have had fourteen members across three generations who attended Oklahoma Panhandle State University.

Norlene Norris was born on August 3, 1924, and was raised in the Eva Community in Northwest Texas County on the family homestead. She attended Frontier and James rural schools for her early education. However, when she started high school, Norlene moved into Mrs. O'Donnell's boarding house to attend school in Goodwell. She worked alongside other girls doing housework, laundry, and lots of ironing during the week in exchange for a room and a small salary. She completed coursework at Panhandle State and furthered her education at Oklahoma State University. Norlene's teaching career began in 1947 with positions at White Hall, Unity, Hardesty, and finally, Guymon Schools, retiring in 1986. In 1991, she participated in a Distance Learning project teaching a math class ahead of her time.

Lloyd Peterson was born on July 21, 1924, on his family's farm South of Guymon. He attended Prairie View School and graduated from Guymon High School in 1946, a few years delayed due to WWII. Lloyd and Norlene were married on May 20, 1949, meeting while teaching school at Unity. They enjoyed 63 years of marriage based on family, faith, church, and community, with a lot of added patience and humor. After graduating from Panhandle State in 1951, Lloyd furthered his education by attending Mortuary College in Dallas. He began a career in the funeral business in 1952 with a friend and partner, Marlin Henson, in the Henson Funeral Home. Lloyd, known as Pete to many, served the community until retiring in 1990.

All three of their children attended and graduated from OPSU. Wynelda (1972) and her husband, Curtis Miller (1978), earned degrees in Elementary Education and had long careers at Optima Schools as teachers and administration. Kim (1974) and his wife, Melissa Peterson (1981), graduated with degrees in Industrial Arts and Elementary Education. Kim finished his degree in Industrial Arts in 1978.

The Petersons are extremely proud that all seven of their grandchildren and their spouses pursued college degrees, and several earned advanced degrees.

“Oklahoma Panhandle State University has always been a special place for the Peterson Family, and we are Panhandle Proud,” stated Kim Peterson.

Their great-grandchildren are carrying on this legacy as three have earned their college degrees, four are currently attending college across the state, and the remaining are dreaming of where they will land upon high school graduation or maybe first grade graduation.

Lloyd and Norlene dedicated their lives to education and were always teachers, tutoring and helping adults in reading classes and leading Sunday School sessions at the First Christian Church. The Petersons reared and helped many kids in addition to their own family. Lloyd and Norlene employed, encouraged, mentored, fed, and housed many students. Lloyd's quick mind, sense of humor, practical joking, and Norlene's good home cooking and loving patience helped generations of young students.

Alumni Association Interim President Katie Quebedeaux stated, “The Peterson family has been a staple in our community for years. Their love for OPSU has never wavered, and we are grateful to recognize their dedication and support of our Aggie family!”

Director of Alumni Relations Shawn Joy, stated, “We are excited to honor the Peterson family. They have given so much to OPSU through the years. They deserve to be recognized and celebrated.” 



/ UNIVERSITY /

## OPSU FARM FOCUSES ON THE FUTURE

*Tracy Kincannon, newly hired Dean of College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing has made it a mission to advance the OPSU farm into a new state of success.*

Kincannon shared, "I am so excited about the hands-on learning opportunities that are taking place at the OPSU college farm. I am thrilled by the career possibilities that our Panhandle State students are able to explore through the school farm. As an OPSU alum, the university farm was the center piece to my education."

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger commented, "Mr. Kincannon has renewed our focus at the OPSU Farm to our students and their futures in the Agricultural Industry. The experiential learning OPSU students gain will make them top prospects upon graduation."

The OPSU school farm was established in 1910 and has served as an integral tool for hands on learning experiences of the agricultural industry for many generations. The farm currently consists of crops, horses, sheep, hogs, and cattle, which allow for student engagement in practical agricultural production practices and knowledge development of real-life experiences as they pursue their degrees. The farm integrates multiple facets of the agriculture industry and students can gain knowledge and understanding of those areas and implement them into their career fields. Incorporating both the University Farm as well as the Firestone Meat Lab, students are able to follow the multiple stages of the livestock industry from breeding to harvesting.

The employees at the farm are currently improving the quality and genetics of our livestock. The university has decreased the commercial sheep flock to purchase 10 head of Registered Hampshire and Shropshire Ewes that will be due to lamb here shortly. The offspring of these Ewes will be used to develop a show team. This will allow our students to take on a project, which will teach good work ethic, responsibility, and the students will get the chance to showcase their hard work through exhibiting these animals at multiple shows.

Dr. Crystal Tolle, a leader of this ongoing project said "We are striving to implement many new and existing livestock changes to the OPSU Farm and livestock. These changes will provide many hands-on learning opportunities that will prepare our students to be more successful in the agricultural workforce. Students will be able to correlate their knowledge with practical skills on the farm, which is a cornerstone of their educational experience." **P**



/ ATHLETICS /

## SHOOTING SPORTS SHOOTING FOR THE STARS

This year Panhandle State University welcomed Tell Dixon as the Shooting Sports Coach and is excited to see what growth the program will have in the coming years. Freshman standout, Emily Robertson, has illustrated the bright future for the team as she continues to dominate at the competitions.

Coach Tell Dixon states, "I have really enjoyed coaching the shooting sports team at Panhandle, we have wonderful facilities, and the team continues to improve overall as well as individually. I can not wait to see what the future will bring for the Panhandle Shooting Sports Team."

The team has been busy traveling to collegiate competitions and representing the university. Practicing diligently during the week and competing on the weekends. This semester they have attended four competitions including; Ft. Hays Shootout(Hays, KS), 7 State Prairie Circuit (North Platte, NE), National Collegiate Shooting Sports Athletic Association (Waco, TX), & ACUI Central Midwest (Sparta, IL). On the second weekend in October, Emily Robertson, Freshman, placed third place in Shooting Clays after a rocky start. She said, "I didn't start the competition off good due to the stock pad of my gun coming apart mid-round. After having it fixed, I knew I needed to fight harder to succeed. Although our next event which was Sporting Clays, is one of my weaker disciplines, I made sure to focus more on having a start strong, stay strong, finish strong, mentality rather than the score itself! Luckily I was able to redeem myself and finish third in that event and bring home a medal!" We cannot wait to see what other future success the team will bring back to Aggie Nation! **P**



/ ATHLETICS /

## EQUESTRIAN RIDES TO SUCCESS

This weekend was the first horse show for the OPSU Equestrian Team with new coach, Kacey Ward, at the helm. Ward spent the summer recruiting this year's team with collectively all new members. With excitement and a little bit of nerves, the team traveled to El Reno, OK where Southern Nazarene University hosted the first fall show of the 2022-2023 season.

It was a weekend full of new team success as the team tied for reserve high point team against all District 2, Zone 7 schools, such as Texas Tech University. Coach Ward stated, "I am very proud and excited for the OPSU Equestrian Team after their first successful show of the season." Ward has built a team to represent at all levels within the show.

Eva Johnson, a freshman, was a standout for the team as she placed Top 5 in Open Reining which is the highest level for the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association, IHSA.

Jayelynn Powell, junior, the one returning athlete showed her veteran status by placing Top 5 in Level 2 Ranch Riding, which is specialty class, and in Level 2 Horsemanship

Carly Jones, a senior, kicked off her final year to show in Rookie Horsemanship, and also brought back a Top 5 placing.

Coach Ward has recruited for not only a competitive team this year, but with room to grow in years to come. Paige Pearson and Nahomy Corral-Olivas are underclasses with junior, Shelby Eck, competing in the Beginner Horsemanship class together. All three placed in the Top 5 respectively. **P**



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# AGGIE FOOTBALL ON WINNING STREAK

The Aggie football team (4-3)(4-2) won 38-10 over Wayland Baptist University (2-4)(2-3). Head Coach, Bob Majeski, stated, "I am extremely proud of the young men and assistant coaches in our football program. We started the year 0-3 and at the present time have won our last 4. This is a testimony to the culture within our program."

Wayland would score on their opening drive. The Aggies would respond with a 17-yard field goal from Freshman Javier Sinecio. Sophomore Brandon Stephens would locate Junior Ryan Acosta for a 16-yard touchdown pass. Wayland would tie the game with a 27-yard field goal. Stephens would encounter freshman Ed Wilder for a 10-yard passing touchdown as the Aggies took the lead 17-10 heading into halftime. Sophomore Jaden Combs delivered the Aggies the boost with an interception early in the third quarter. The Aggies capitalized on the interception with a 30-yard rushing touchdown from Senior Willie McCline.

Aggies had some magic up their sleeves with a couple of trick plays; Jalen Partida would find Senior Jashone Brown for a 10-yard touchdown and 2 Yard touchdown pass to Ryan Acosta. Aggie's defense was locked after giving up ten points; Senior Tyriek Kimble had a tackle, Senior Ja' Quavion Daniels had a forced fumble, and recorded three tackles. Junior Kameron Dickerson led the Aggies with seven tackles, four of which were tackles for loss yards. **P**



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# WOMEN'S SOCCER PREVAILS THROUGH SEASON

Aggies women's soccer team (1-7-2)(0-2-2) has been dealing with the injury bug, only managing ten players per game. The Aggies faced Central Christian College, where they went down 3-0 and managed to come back and tied 4-4. The Aggies outshot the Tigers 21 to 19.

While speaking with Head Coach Evan Camperell he stated, "These next three games are KEY! I am PUMPED that we are getting three of our injured players back since we have been playing with only ten players and no subs! I can't wait to see what the team can do together on the field this weekend with eleven starting and now two subs!! Building off of the last two performances and with our offensive really starting to click we are hoping to get that conference win Saturday and ride the wave all the way through our two Dallas area games next week!" **P**

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## AGGIE VOLLEYBALL NO QUIT HERE



Aggie volleyball 14-7 (7-5) is in the middle of the pack in the Sooner Athletic Conference. Aggies, as a team, managed 839 kills with a percentage of .188. The Aggie's defense has 55 blocks more than their opponents. The Aggies will finish with five home games in October.

Head Coach Julie Allen stated "I am very proud of this team of young women. With each opportunity we have had together as a team, we get better as a team in the sport, understanding the game and building our team culture and goals. They come ready each day, determined, focused, and confident in each other. Their success is the direct result of the hard work each student-athlete has put into this season and the past Aggies that have shared with us what it takes to be the best team.

Lastly, I am proud of our team's never quit mentality this year. I say this because we have two teams ranked Top 20 in the nation all season, SAGU and Texas Wesleyan, in the Sooner Athletic Conference. And there is John Brown, that is top 30 in the country. Our Aggies play against the best of the best, and each match is a battle. I am so proud of our Aggies for not backing down, fighting it out, and coming extremely close to pulling out the win. It will happen soon because of this team's drive never to quit." **P**



/ ATHLETICS /

## MEN'S SOCCER ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Aggies men's soccer (2-5-1)(0-3) has been in a slump, but with the majority of the roster being freshmen and sophomores, Aggies have room for growth. Aggies did manage to sweep in weekly conference honors on August 29th. Head Coach Bailey Guffin shared "Men's soccer right now is going through the process. For us no matter what the record looks like, we are right on track in terms of our long term vision for this team. The first step for us was to establish a culture that was not only welcoming to players, but was built to keep those players. We knew that would come with keeping current leadership as well as building a new core. It was a no brainer to make Daniel De Mello and Catalin Nastuta captains to make our culture come to life. We were also lucky to bring a new young core of freshman to emphasize that.

The next phase to our vision was introducing the "80% rule" in our program. We believe that soccer is only 20% of what these guys do, but the other 80% comes from academics, culture, fundraising and community. We believe when that 80% is taken care of, soccer becomes easy. When soccer is easy and stress free, you're built to win. We talk a lot about how these things eventually impact how we perform on the field, so everything we do has to be intentional. Everyone wants to win soccer games, but our belief is culture builds winning.

Where we go from here is to continue to trust in what we are doing. From a soccer perspective, we have the pieces that will make us a good soccer team. It's a young team, a young staff and a new direction. We are not looking for the short term fixes, we are looking at a project that will last us much longer. The most valuable thing we have right now is that every person in our team comes back looking to get better. The staff comes to the office and finds ways to adapt. Even looking at next year, this will not be the same team. They will be hungry and ready." **P**



323 Eagle Blvd  
Goodwell, OK 73939

# 16th Annual



# CHILI COOK-OFF

NOVEMBER 12TH, 2022 | CHILI JUDGING @12PM  
OPSU TAILGATE

FOOTBALL GAME: OPSU VS OTTAWA UNIVERSITY ARIZONA