

PIONEER ONLINE

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EDITORIAL

RESEARCH
NEEDED FOR
CMV VIRUS

Reporter Chris James says CMV, a common virus that affects thousands, needs more attention and a viable vaccine. Read more inside.

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CAMPUS LIFE

UNITED
NATIONS TO
MEET OCCC

OCCC will play video host to members of the United Nations from the Dominican Republic regarding human issues. See what topics are up for discussion.

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SPORTS

LASER TAG
TOURNEY
APRIL 25

OCCC is hosting a Laser Tag tournament, free to all students. Sign ups have started and will continue through April ?? For more details, see inside.

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CAMPUS LIFE

WHEN IS A
RELATIONSHIP
ABUSIVE?

Student Life hosted a Brown Bag luncheon recently that explored how to have a healthy relationship.

COMMUNITY, p. 10

PIONEER

OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

APRIL 20, 2012

WWW.OCCC.EDU/PIONEER

COVERING OCCC SINCE 1978

Ice cream social

Kasey Handley, Communications Lab tutor, serves ice cream at the Communications Lab 2 open house event on April 12. The Communications Lab 2 can be found in room 146 of the Visual and Performing Arts Center.

CHRIS JAMES/
PIONEER



OCCC, experts' views differ on open records

(Editor's Note: In part two of a two-part series, Pioneer reports investigate whether OCCC releases public records in a timely manner and whether an employee is available to take Open Records requests during business hours.)

In part two of a two-part series, the Pioneer investigates OCCC's compliance with the Open Records Act

is being asked.

State and national experts say prompt and reasonable access should be a matter of days. For some OCCC administrators, it means weeks, months or years.

PROMPT AND REASONABLE ACCESS

An example would be a story published in the Pioneer on March 30. The story reported the college spent \$75,000 more in 2010 to maintain the Aquatic Center than the center collected in revenue. The data provided also gave the figures for 2008 and 2009, both years where expenses outpaced revenue.

Prompt and reasonable access to public records is required under the Oklahoma Open Records Act. What defines "prompt and reasonable?"

That would depend on who

Pioneer reporters requested an accounting of Aquatic Center revenues and expenses on Jan. 20. The document outlining expenses and revenue came March 5 in an email message from Cordell Jordan, media relations coordinator.

Jordan is the college official charged with accepting records requests from the public and providing the records once they have been collected by the appropriate department.

A previous Pioneer request for Aquatic Center records in April 2011 met with the response from Jordan that the records did not exist.

OCCC Community Development Vice President

See **RECORDS** page 12

Students should be on alert for scholarship scam

WHITNEY KNIGHT
Online Editor
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A recent scam targeting current and prospective students in search of financial aid has college officials concerned, said Financial Aid Assistant Director Linette McMurtrey.

McMurtrey said the official-looking document from an organization called the Student Financial Resource Center has been popping up in mailboxes nationwide, including in those of some OCCC students.

The letter states students can fill out the enclosed forms to apply for the "maximum merit and need-based (scholarship) programs" available.

"They use a symbol like the U.S. Department of Education and use similar terminology," she said. "It looks and feels legitimate."

However, the organization also requests an enclosed "processing fee" of \$59, which, McMurtrey said, is a tell-tale sign of a scam.

"Students can get information about, and apply for, all of those scholarships for free," she said. "We don't want our students paying for services available to them for free."

McMurtrey said an increase in scams usually occurs around this time of year, due to the upcoming fall semester.

"It's that time of year," she said. "The 2012-2013 year is starting up and that's when people start filing for financial aid and filling out scholarships."

McMurtrey said she is unaware how companies receive students' names and contact information.

She encourages students who receive something that appears to be a scam to alert Financial Aid immediately.

"We like to be informed of these things," she said. "That way, we can send out emails to students alerting them of the situation."

Besides suspicious costs, McMurtrey said, there are other ways to spot legitimate opportunities from false ones.

She said official financial aid infor-

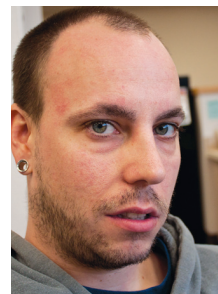
See **SCAM** page 9

OPINION

EDITORIAL | Citizens should fight for their right to be tested, writer says

Common infection still a mystery

Congenital cytomegalovirus or CMV infections are responsible for more long-term complications and infant deaths than Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, and spina bifida, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



CHRIS JAMES

Despite also being the most common viral infection infants in the U.S. are born with, hardly anyone knows about it.

CMV is part of the herpes virus group that includes the Varicella-Zoster virus, responsible for chicken pox and shingles, and the Epstein-Barr virus that causes mononucleo-

sis or mono. It is a fairly common infection, harmless in most cases, but once infected with CMV, a person carries it for life. The CDC estimates of every 100 adults in the U.S., 50 to 80 are infected with CMV by the time they reach the age of 40.

Most healthy individuals will not experience any symptoms when infected while others may get a fever, sore throat, fatigue and other flu-like symptoms.

In both cases, it is very unlikely that a person would realize he or she had been infected with CMV.

The virus is usually spread through contact with body fluids like saliva, urine, blood or breast milk,

and, of course, is sexually transmitted.

The greatest harm that can occur from an infection is when it is passed to an unborn child. The CDC said there is a 1 in 100 chance that a mother infected before pregnancy will pass it on to her fetus.

They also say 33 out of every 100 women who became infected initially during pregnancy will pass it on. The CDC estimates 1 to 4 of 100 infected women had their primary infection occur during pregnancy.

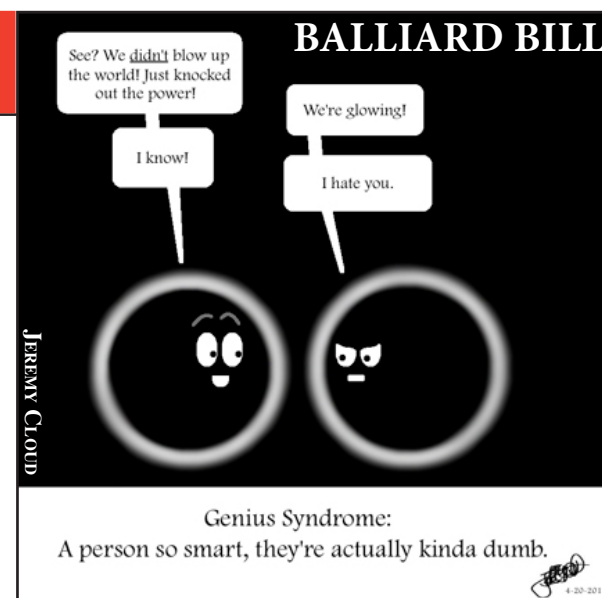
According to the CDC, 5,000 children each year suffer permanent problems caused by CMV infections. These include hearing loss, vision loss, mental disability, lack of coordination, seizures, and death in some rare cases.

Some infected infants will not show any signs of problems at birth, but may develop them over time. Early detection can help the child's development.

Outside of sexual contact, the CDC said prevention of an infection during pregnancy can be as simple as washing your hands for 15 to 20 seconds after changing diapers, feeding a young child, wiping a child's nose or drool and handling children's toys. Pregnant women also should never share food, drinks, eating utensils, or toothbrushes with young children.

This is a dangerous virus that gets very little attention. Why don't more people know about it? Why isn't the test for CMV part of standard testing? A test exists.

A recent call to Planned Parenthood turned up more troubling news. When asked if a client could



be tested for CMV through their clinics, the answer was no. When asked why the test couldn't be done, the answer was "we just don't."

At www.stopcmv.org, experts said the testing process is not definitive enough yet for it to be part of routinely testing, "because there is no test that can definitively rule out primary CMV infection during pregnancy."

Stopcmv.org said CMV vaccines are still in the research and development stage but they receive no dedicated federal funding. Obviously, it will take the public's engagement and support to stop CMV.

The only way to know for sure if you are carrying the infection is to get tested and everyone should get tested. The lives of innocent newborns are at risk and we should do all that we can to ensure their safety.

—CHRIS JAMES
STAFF WRITER

LETTER TO THE EDITOR | Taking the stairs better for students' health for many reasons

Main Building elevator a risky ride, reader cautions

To the Editor:

If you have ever been late to a class on the third floor or considered the luxury of toting your books around in a wheeled bag, then you might have considered using the elevator behind the coffee shop.

You might reconsider once you became aware of said elevator's track record of becoming "over limit" far under the posted limit and getting stuck, sometimes for minutes, sometimes longer.

If you have ever walked by the coffee

shop and heard a shrill whining sound emanating from the elevator, yes, it is indeed stuck.

While this is a fairly regular occurrence, it is generally quickly fixed — temporarily — and the college has apparently done little to nothing to fix it permanently.

If the prospect of getting stuck in a cramped place with a cluster of people you do not know for an unknown amount of time isn't enough to cause you to avoid the elevator, then it is also worth noting that several times while I

was waiting for the elevator, the doors have come open with no elevator visible, leaving the shaft open as the elevator arrives.

Another time, after my class let out, the teacher asked several students to stay and assist her in bringing some of the students' larger poster boards down to her office.

As three people got on the elevator, it groaned and then proceeded to sharply drop two feet.

The door remained open during this unexpected fall and then, the elevator

stayed two feet lower than it should without falling farther.

As the elevator continued to emanate low groans, the rest of the class agreed the stairs might be a better option.

Even if, after a long day of classes, the elevator seems like a welcome relief for your tired feet, consider taking the stairs.

It is a healthier option and it may very well help make sure you get to class on time.

—KELSEA BURTON
CHILD DEVELOPMENT MAJOR

PIONEER

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The PIONEER welcomes letters to the editor and encourages the use of this publication as a community forum. All letters must include the author's name, address, phone number and signature. E-mail letters should include all but the signature. The PIONEER will withhold the author's

name if the request is made in writing.

The PIONEER has the right to edit all letters and submissions for length, libel and obscenity. Letters should be fewer than 250 words. Students must list their major. OCCC staff and faculty must list their work title.

Letters to the editor can be submitted to the PIONEER office, located in room 1F2 on the first floor of the Art and Humanities Building, mailed to 7777 S. May Ave., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73159, or submitted via e-mail to editor@occc.edu with a phone number for verification included. The PIONEER ONLINE also can be accessed at www.occc.edu/pioneer.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

LETTER TO THE EDITOR | Personhood law leaves only women responsible

Reader says make sexes equal

To the Editor:

The issue of “personhood” raises a question of responsibility. The debate of birth control, abortion and procreation has been placed on the shoulders of one party, women.

Of course, in the horribly patriarchal society in which we live, this is to be expected. If we are going to call women who use birth control “sluts” or openly allow those who have abortions to be ridiculed, I feel that men, as they feel they have control over women and their bodies, should also bear responsibility in the following ways.

1. Any male wishing to receive a drug to treat erectile dysfunction shall be subject to a prostate exam, blood panel, full physical, a complete listing of all previous (or current) STDs and a database check to ensure that the male does not owe back child support and is not a sex offender. The final decision will rest with a panel of women who will decide if the male

is intellectually sound enough to be allowed to pass his genes along. If a (U.S.) House (of Representatives) panel on women’s birth control and insurance coverage of it only includes males, then, in the interest of equality, women should have some say in men’s issues.

2. The information gathered shall be consolidated into a database (much like the one which many Oklahoma legislators wanted to create for women who have abortions), where the male’s date of birth, city, occupation and race can be viewed. Also, female commentators in the media will be allowed to call them “sluts” without fear of retribution.

3. Any male who fathers a child and misses more than three consecutive child support payments, or three in two years, will be subject to a forced vasectomy. No excuses such as, “I couldn’t find a job,” will be accepted. We do not need any more men helping to turn women

into those pesky “welfare mamas!”

4. Finally, no employer shall be forced to pay for erectile dysfunction drugs. In fact, they should only be used for procreation (since the “moral majority” seems to be heading in the direction of sex being for reproduction only). If pregnancy does not occur within three months of drug “therapy” the male shall be forbidden from receiving the prescription for a period of five years and ridiculed in the same fashion as women who leave and enter abortion clinics are.

I truly feel this levels the playing field. As a male and a feminist I am saddened, shocked, sickened and outraged by this placing of undue burden upon our mothers, sisters, partners and friends.

I am doing my part by planting the seeds of an idea which helps men “man-up” and hold some form of responsibility.

—ANTHONY EDWARDS
PIONEER READER

PLAY REVIEW | ‘A Funny Thing Happened’ entertains in number of ways

Campus play makes impression

Comedy erupted on the stage of the Bruce Owen Theater in April as the OCCC players presented “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum.”

Taylor Reich started off the evening by belting out the opening Stephen Sondheim tune, setting the mood for an evening of laughter.

As Pseudolus — a Roman slave with a flair for manipulating everyone including his master Hero — Reich took full command of the audience. With his delightful facial expressions and outstanding comedic banter he drew viewers into a happy mode and kept them in the palm of his hand throughout the play. This does not seem an easy task since this musical comedy is full of twists and turns.

Scott Whitehead as Hero has fallen in love with possibly the only virgin in town Philia after seeing her through the window of the neighboring house, which happens to be a house of ill repute, full of entertaining courtesans and one very funny eunuch played by Sebastian Rojas.

The virgin has been sold to Miles Gloriosus by the town purveyor of women Marcus Lycus.

To make the situation seem even more impossible, Hero’s parents, Senix and Domina have forbidden their son to associate with the neighbors and put Pseudolus in charge of being sure Hero abides by their wishes. Pseudolus thinks he can earn his freedom by concocting a plot to get Hero together with Philia, and the insanity ensues.

Whitehead had the best singing voice in the play. He also is a natural talent or truly a kind and innocent young man to have been believable as the gullible Hero.

A bit more emotion from Candice Parker as Philia, would not have been out of character. Rather than an innocent girl in love with one man and being sold to another, it appeared she would be content with whomever she was with at the moment. Philia’s commitment to her contract is understood, but did she love Hero or was she looking for a way out of slavery? It was not clear by the performance.

On the other hand, Caulen Shannon as Hysterium looked as though he might hyperventilate when he was put in a dress and wig, and had to pretend to be dead, then threatened with a funeral pyre, and

was chased through the audience by a man who thought Hysterium was the virgin. That might make a man shake. It certainly provoked laughter.

Speaking of provoking laughs; Nicholas McDaniels as old Erronius on a fool’s errand, elicited instant giggles each time he ran across the stage, counting his laps around the town.

Chris Davis, Blake Gonzalez and the Proteans made their singing laughable. Sarah Fitsimmons and Gabriel Pranter seemed to take their voices more seriously, losing some of the comedic overtone.

An actor once said he didn’t try out for a musical because he couldn’t sing, to which a very smart professor answered, “If you are an actor then act like you can sing, and make the audience believe it.”

Musical comedy is not easy to perform, but the cast of “A Funny Thing Happened ...” was filled with fine actors. Director Brent Noel and Musical Director Michael Boyle can be proud of their efforts with this production.

Rated: A

—CYNTHIA PRAEFKE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

ADVISER'S 411

Students who plan in advance more successful

Enrollment for the summer and fall semester is now open. Students should enroll as soon as possible.

Students who set their goals early and have an action plan are often more successful in their academic careers.

If you are working, have a family or other priorities that you must plan your coursework around, meeting with an adviser in advance can make enrollment a much smoother process.

Classes are filling up quickly, and optimal times and days for those on a restricted schedule will become difficult to find.

Therefore, planning ahead and meeting with an academic adviser now may ensure optimal course placement and course availability.

Enrolling early allows you to ask important questions and get informed responses.

Students often want to know: What classes do I have left to take? Can I take an intersession course? Can I enroll online? Do I need to test for course placement? When do I apply for graduation?

These are all questions the Office of Academic Advising can help you get the answers to.

The Office of Academic Advising can also confirm or change program/majors, request faculty advisers, run degree checks, write diversified studies contracts, help with course selection, evaluate test scores, and establish personalized education plans.

For international students who will be traveling within the U.S. and abroad this summer, it is important to come in and meet with an academic adviser to set up your fall courses.

By doing so, international students ensure their enrollment and degree/course planning is done and they can spend the rest of their summer worry free about finding the appropriate courses at the right times for their schedules.

As always, all students can avoid long lines during the heavy enrollment periods the first few weeks before classes start by choosing classes and enrolling early.

We encourage students to meet with an adviser now to enroll for summer and fall.

To set up an appointment to meet with an academic adviser call 405-682-7535.

—LINDA KAY LITTLE
TRANSFER AND ACADEMIC ADVISING
COORDINATOR

Arbor Day event encourages students to participate

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“The Green Task Force will be giving away saplings that were provided by the Oklahoma Forestry Service.”

—LISA TEEL

EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RISK MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

April is the month harboring the one day of the year dedicated solely to mother earth, Earth Day.

Although April 22 is the actual date, events will be taking place throughout the month and OCCC will be celebrating in a big way, not just for Earth Day, but Arbor Day as well said Lisa Teel, Director of Emergency Planning and Risk Management.

OCCC will be celebrating from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Arbor/Earth Day, April 26, in the Main Dining Area, Teel said.

She said some of the events are sponsored by groups such as the Sierra Club, Shawnee Sustainability, OG&E, OSU at OKC and hopefully some of the student clubs. Teel said the sponsors will have booths providing information on sustainability, land erosion, and saving energy on electric bills.

During the Earth Day/Arbor Day celebration students will have an opportunity to play a role in helping the environment, Teel said.

“The Green Task Force will be giving

away saplings that were provided by the Oklahoma Forestry Service,” she said.

Along with tree sapling and loads of environmentally friendly information, Teel said there will also be many prizes to give away.

The Green Task Force is encouraging OCCC faculty, staff and students to dispose of household hazardous waste at any disposal facility one week before the event.

Oklahoma City Stormwater Quality division operates the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility at 1621 S. Portland, Teel

“Keep the receipt,” Teel said.

“It can be used to enter a drawing for a gift donated by the Sierra Club.”

The Sierra Club is an international group that works to raise awareness about environmental issues, Teel said.

Teel also urges students to celebrate Earth Day in their own way by planting trees, recycling, reducing and reusing.

OCCC isn't the only one participating in this celebration, the Oklahoma City metro area has a number of events and activities in celebration of Earth Day 2012.



Local Earth Day events and celebrations

EarthFest at Martin Park Nature Center

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., April 21, the Martin Park Nature Center in Oklahoma City will celebrate with EarthFest, a series of Earth-friendly educational seminars about composting, home energy audits, storm water recycling and more. The event includes family-oriented games, crafts and other nature-based activities.

Lake Overholser and Stinchcomb Wildlife Refuge Cleanup

Help rid Lake Overholser and the adjoining refuge of trash and restore these areas to their natural beauty. Trash pick-up is from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., April 21, and includes free lunch and prizes to those volunteering. The cleanup crew will meet at the Overholser pavilion. For more information, email karen.miles@deq.ok.gov or call 702-8192 to register.

Hazardous Waste Collection

There will be a special hazardous waste collection from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., April 28, at State Fair Park. Open to Oklahoma City residents only, the collection gives an opportunity to dispose of items such as ammunition, tires and computer equipment. Bring a current water bill stub to prove residency.

Party for the Planet at the Zoo

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., April 22, the Oklahoma City Zoo will feature live music, giveaways, family activities and much more in observance of Earth Day. Events are included with all regular priced zoo admission.

Free Metro Transit

Oklahoma City's Metro Transit system will offer free bus and trolley rides throughout the day from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on April 20. Metro Transit Bus service in Oklahoma City, Tinker AFB, Norman and Edmond is also included.

Free Shred Day

From 7 to 11 a.m., April 28, 7-11 a.m., Waste Management Recycle America and the Utilities Department are offering free shredding and recycling at 5519 NW 4th in Oklahoma City, in observance of Free Shred Day. Bring financial and personal documents for proper disposal.

Free Starbucks Coffee or Tea

Starbucks will be giving away free coffee and tea all day on Earth Day, April 22, when you bring in any travel mug or tumbler. Visit your local Starbucks coffee shop for more details.

—<http://www.okc.gov/sustain>

Volunteers donate time to community funded pantry

LYRIC JACKSON
News Writing Student

OCCC students volunteered to stock shelves and help customers with their grocery shopping at Other Options Food Pantry on March 17.

Other Options Food Pantry, 3636 NW 51, helps people that have HIV or AIDS who can't afford food.

Manager Kim Williams said most of

the customers are people they know by name because they come quite often.

Other Options Food Pantry is fully funded by donations. Local companies help supply the food, Williams said. They get their groceries with donations from places like WalMart, Sam's, Target and Starbucks.

She said sometimes they have anonymous donations from different companies to help them with groceries

and toiletries.

Tanieca Baldwin, an OCCC student volunteer, said she had a great time helping the customers and giving back to the community.

Baldwin said she has realized how so many people who are HIV-positive can appear to be very healthy.

She said she believes HIV and AIDS awareness needs to be discussed with more young children to help prevent

them getting the virus.

In order to qualify to shop at Other Options Pantry, a person has to be infected with HIV or AIDS, meet their income guidelines and be receiving some kind of public assistance.

For more information on Other Options Food Pantry, Williams can be contacted at 405-605-8020.

Other Options Food Pantry always welcomes volunteers.

SOUTHERN GIRL FINDS CALLING IN LIFE

Class clown becomes full-time college professor

CHASE BLANKENSHIP

News Writing Student

Teaching was not the first career choice Biology Professor Sherri Arthur had in mind. Growing up in Thomasville, Ga., and Panama City, Fla., she developed an interest in marine ecology.

Her father had a shrimp boat for 12 years which helped her gain a particular interest in shrimp habitat.

"Once I started research in estuaries, areas that shrimp use for nurseries, I became concerned about wetlands and started my research there. My goals were to work in the protection of our wetlands," Arthur said.

At the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Arthur said she studied ecological research with high hopes that her dreams would all come true, she suffered a serious injury in a car accident that put those dreams on hold.

During this interlude, Arthur said she was introduced to the world of teaching. That was only meant to be temporary, she said. Now, 13 years into her teaching career, Arthur said she has loved every minute of it.

Arthur moved to Oklahoma in 2002 to teach as a full-time professor at Connors State College, after hav-

ing taught at Rose State College, and Oklahoma State University.

Then, in January 2012, she became a full-time science professor at OCCC.

"I love it here," she said. "I love how all the students are very energetic and dedicated."

Arthur said she takes some different approaches to teaching, saying that she likes to be close to her class and talk to each student individually. She wants each one to have an understanding of what she is trying to teach.

Being a class clown in high school has also played a part in the way Arthur teaches her class. She likes to keep the class laughing and interested in the material.

Teaching now is a career that Arthur continues to look forward to doing every day. She has one message for future science students:

"Be prepared to put in the time," she said.



CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

Biology Professor Sherri Arthur assists Lesley Jones, nursing major, in the dissection of a piglet on April 11. Arthur has been teaching for 13 years, but this is her first semester as a full-time professor at OCCC. Arthur said she takes some different approaches to teaching, saying she likes to be close to her class and talk to each student individually.

WATER4 FOUNDATION USES DA VINCI DESIGN FOR WATER DRILLING

Ancient pump design inspires clean drinking water

JUSTIN VODA

News Writing Student

One of Leonardo da Vinci's ancient designs has helped the Water4 Foundation bring clean drinking water to more than 200,000 people in numerous developing countries in Africa, Asia and South America.

Chris Cotner, executive director of the non-governmental organization, visited the OCCC campus in late March to explain how Da Vinci's design has helped so many.

"We needed to come up with a design for a water pump that was both inexpensive to produce and easy to maintain," Cotner said. The Water4 Foundation enlisted the help of Steve Stewart to create a pump.

Stewart, an Oklahoma native who received a bachelor's degree in industrial psychology from Oklahoma State University, based his design on a Da Vinci sketch that was in a book he purchased while on vacation in Rome 10 years ago.

The original design called for materials such as sheep stomachs and animal skin. The Water4 Foundation modified it to use PVC piping, a

material that is readily available in just about every country.

"I had never worked with water pumps ever," Stewart said in a phone interview. "It took 2 ½ months, 18 hours a day, seven days a week learning about hydrodynamics and PVC to finish the project."

The original Da Vinci design did not take into account atmospheric pressure making it impossible to drill beyond 30 feet. A few modifications and nine prototypes later, Water4 was ready to send the pumps into the field.

"Call it miraculous or coincidental, but we have not been able to find this Da Vinci design in any other book," Cotner said.

With these pumps the Water4 Foundation is able to bring intermediate water drilling technology to countries where people are still using shovels and pickaxes to dig for water. The pumps are coupled with drilling materials and shipped to countries in kits.

Each drill kit costs about \$5,000 and can drill up to 50 wells in a community. It requires manpower but no electricity or other power supply. Each drill kit can supply water for 10,000 to 30,000 people. The kits can easily fit in the

back of an SUV or, in some cases, are carried on the back of motorcycles, Cotner said.

Oftentimes sufficient drinking water can be found as little as 30 feet beneath the Earth's surface. Before these communities were provided with the technology to drill their own wells, people would have to walk miles every day just to obtain clean drinking water.

"The average walk to get water, round-trip, is about 3.5 miles," Cotner said. "On the way back you have to carry five gallons of water, which weighs approximately 50 pounds."

This painstaking chore is performed upwards of three times a day, on a daily basis, by woman and girls.

The wells are fairly easy to operate and to maintain, Cotner said. However, if a problem does persist, the Water4 Foundation is able to communicate with the nationals via Skype to offer solutions.

The foundation provides well-drilling technology but works with local people to drill the wells.

For many of these nationals, water drilling has become a way to generate income. Many have started their own drilling businesses that are thriving.

On average natives make about \$150 per well, a good income in many developing countries.

The Water4 Foundation not only provides people with clean drinking water but also with a sense of pride and community.

"We are dedicated to providing widely accessible, inexpensive, and sustainable water solutions and to create a catalyst for alleviating poverty and combating the global water crisis," Cotner said.

Cotner practiced law as an attorney for seven years before joining the Water4 Foundation in 2008, he said.

Cotner said he handled the so-called "bread and butter" legal cases, which included divorces, bankruptcies, child custody hearings, as well as corporate litigations.

When he was approached by the founders of Water4 Foundation, Dick and Terri Greenly, and asked if he was tired of being a lawyer, Cotner responded, "I was tired the day they swore me in." Thus began his career as a waterman.

For more information on the Water4 Foundation, visit their website at www.water4.org.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM NOW TAKING APPLICANTS

June application deadline approaches quickly

BAILEY GATEWOOD
News Writing Student

June is the deadline to apply to the Occupational Therapy Assistant program, a two-year course of study for students interested in a health care profession, said OTA Professor Reeca Young.

Occupational therapy assistants work with clients of all ages, leading to the greatest possible level of independent living, Young said.

Young gave three examples to what an occupational therapist assistant could be working with.

Some examples are a senior adult who has had a stroke, a young soldier who has post traumatic stress disorder, or a child with autism, she said.

Young said every fall semester the program accepts 20 to 24 students, with around 60 to 70 applying and qualifying.

Qualifying for the program is based solely off of eligible applicants who have been ranked according to GPA, Young said.

The remaining applicants will be placed on an alternate list.

In the past two years the numbers have been increasing for students qualifying for the program but the number accepted has stayed in the same range as before.

"In the future, we hope to be able to have another flex-track program to create more room for other students," Young said.

"We want to let them be able to move at a slower pace for those who are going to school

and also have a full-time job."

Young has been a full-time professor of OTA at OCCC for seven years.

Throughout the two-year program, each student is required to do field work along with class work.

Fieldwork is set up through the program and gives students on-site clinical experience.

Occupational therapy assistants are used in a variety of areas such as hospitals, skilled nurse facilities, public school systems, out-patient clinics, communication based agencies, and private homes.

In the fourth semester of the program, each student is required to work full-time off campus at a clinic that has been set up for them by the program, working around 40 hours a week, Young said.

OCCC has contracts with about 40 different clinics located from Edmond to Norman, hoping that the students can work near where they live. This benefits students who were commuting long distances to class, Young said.

Young recommends students join SOTA, the Student Occupational Therapy Association, which is a club for the students in the program.

This club is a good way for the students to meet other students in the program and make contacts for the future.

Upon graduation from the program, graduates are eligible to sit for the National Certification Exam for the Occupational Therapy Assistant.

Once students pass the test,


they can apply for a license from the state.

Deadline for the program is in June and applications are online. For further questions,


contact Young at ryoung@occc.edu.

Additional information on SOTA can be found in the office of Student Life located

in the Main Building near the Coffee Shop or by visiting their website sign up at https://occc.campusgroups.com/club_signup.




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OCCC 

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AUTOMOTIVE PROGRAM KEEPS UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

CNG automobile conversion taught here

ALISE SQUIRIC

News Writing Student

Cars and trucks can burn compressed natural gas instead of gasoline, but it takes some know-how to make the conversion, said Richard Steere, head of the Transportation Technology Department at OCCC. The result is vehicles that run longer, cheaper and cleaner.

OCCC is the only college in the nation to provide manufacturing training for IMPCO manufacturing, he said.

Based out of Santa Ana, Calif., the company makes the kits that automotive students use to convert cars and trucks to CNG, Steere said.

Automotive Professor Brad Walker said he teaches classes for students so that they can retrofit gasoline vehicles with CNG, using IMPCO technology.

Walker said once they've completed the training course, students can become state certified to perform the conversion.

Since the pressure of compressed natural gas is about 3600 pounds per square inch, it is very important that the cars are converted right, Steere said. That is why it is important for mechanics to know what they are doing.

Steere said OCCC also is the only college in the nation to teach the course for technicians to become IMPCO certified. So far, OCCC has trained 190 technicians from around the country and even Canada.

According to the course packet

students receive during this program, compressed natural gas, also known as CNG, "is an environmentally clean, plentiful, low-cost, domestically produced fuel for motor vehicles."

Many fleet services are converting their fleets to CNG and companies are beginning to look into the options of converting their vehicles to CNG, Steere said.

General Motors wanted to help OCCC in its training and donated a new Suburban to be converted to CNG, Walker said.

Steere explained the environmental benefits of compressed natural gas.

"CNG is 90 percent methane and not as much carbon as gasoline, so it is cleaner for the environment. Everything that decomposes turns to methane."

If most motor vehicles ran on natural gas, Steere said, the U.S. would no longer have to buy imported oil and instead could use the abundance of domestic natural gas.

Since the conversion to a CNG vehicle can be expensive, not every person wants to convert their car. It costs about \$8000 to \$12,000 to convert a vehicle to CNG, Steere said.

Steere has converted his 1959 Ford truck to CNG and says he fills it up for about \$1.99 per gallon equivalent or GGE.

Walker said CNG is sold by the GGE, which is the amount of natural gas needed to create the same energy as a



CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

Richard Steere, professor of automotive technology, works with the instructional model of a wiring harness for a compressed natural gas conversion of gasoline engines. Students in the conversion class have the opportunity to work with IMPCO conversion parts.

gallon of gasoline.

Steere's vehicle has a switch which will allow him to instantaneously switch between CNG and regular gasoline, Walker said. He said modern vehicles do not have this option. The vehicles computer will decide when to switch; however the CNG option can be turned off completely.

When Steere needs to make long trips, he said he simply drives his truck on the compressed natural gas until it runs out. If no CNG refueling station is available, he fills up with regular gasoline and continues on his journey.

To fill up on CNG one simply must go to a gas station that sells CNG, Walker said.

He said Google will find local stations if CNG is typed into the search.

Walker said CNG stations are found primarily in the Oklahoma City and Tulsa metro but he said they are becoming more plentiful.

"There are currently about 50 stations in the state," Walker said.

He said by 2015 there should be a CNG fill-up station every 100 miles on the highways so these vehicles can make long trips solely on natural gas.

AKASH PATEL TALKS ABOUT HIS INTERNSHIP IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

U.N. video conference to discuss internships

ROBERT BOLTON

Community Writer

communitywriter@occc.edu

The United Nations is co-sponsoring a video conference with OCCC Student Life, the Multicultural Student Business Association and the Dominican Republic.

Goodwill ambassador Akash Patel will be hosting the video conference from noon to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 24, in the Bruce Owen Theater.

Patel said all students are encouraged to join the conference.

According to their website the U.N. is the foremost leader on human rights, development of countries and peace.

The men and women serving in the U.N. dedicate their lives to the betterment of mankind, and try their best to make the world a better place the website says.

Patel said the conference will be a discussion with actual leaders of the U.N., Office of the First Lady and Global Foundation for Democracy and Development with the purpose of sharing information with students and the community regarding volunteer and internship opportunities with international government and non-profit agencies, specifically in the Dominican Republic.

The conference will discuss leadership, human trafficking, and doctors and nurses without borders, Patel said.

He also said they will discuss volunteering and internship possibilities that students can take part in as well as learning about the function of the U.N.

Patel, who completed an internship with the U.N. in January, said he spent three weeks in the Dominican Republic as a Goodwill Ambassador and motivational speaker.

Patel said the entire trip was paid for by the Office of the First Lady and was set up through social networking, using Facebook as his source.

Patel said during the trip he worked with prisoners, juvenile delinquents and human and sex trafficking victims, most of whom were children.

Patel said the children gave him gifts

in honor of his work while there, which touched him deeply.

"They performed a dance for me on my last day, just in my honor," he said.

Patel said the work he did was educational.

"I worked with thousands of people and leaders," Patel said.

"I was on several TV shows, so I reached out to hundreds and thousands of Dominicans."

Patel said people of any age can volunteer to work with the U.N.

However, to have a paid internship a person must have a bachelors degree and be 24 years of age or older.

"You are never too young to make a difference," he said.

SPORTS

SPORTS | Free event offered

Laser tourney targets campus April 25

SETH BAETA

News Writing Student

PIONEER STAFF

sportswriter@occc.edu

A one-day single elimination laser tag tournament will be held on campus Wednesday, April 25, said Eric Watson, Sports and Recreation specialist.

Any student interested in joining this event can register at the Recreation and Fitness office for free anytime before the event, he said.

Watson said the teams will be made up of about 5 to 10 players and will battle in an elimination event from 2 to 4 p.m., that will be held on the field south of the Aquatic Center on campus. Watson said all students are welcome.

"I encourage the students to put their teams together," Watson said.

Watson said originally the event was supposed to cost \$5 per student but has been changed to a free intramural event.

He said students still need to sign up on imleagues.com to take part in the event.

Watson said the teams will face off in a single elimination event until only two teams are standing.

The winner of that final battle will determine the champions, he said.

Watson said all the equipment is being provided by a local laser tag rental company.

"Mobile Laser Forces will be providing the equipment

Set a goal



CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

Stephen Brown prepares to take on teammate Olaoye Julius in an OCCC soccer team practice held on April 12 at the soccer field in preparation for their upcoming games.



It will be nice to do something like this to keep my mind off my classes."

—PATRICK THOMPSON
OCCC STUDENT

and overseeing the tournament," Watson said.

According to the equipment rental company website, www.mobilelaserforces.com, laser tag does not involve physical contact, but instead the guns work like a remote control, sending a remote signal that will "tag" the object or person.

The website says that laser tag is a lot like paintball, but allows more flexibility for different locations of play.

There is no restriction on men or women, but Watson said players must be prepared for a lot of running.

And it would be best if players wear clothing they can easily move in, he said.

Student Patrick Thompson said he is excited for the upcoming laser tag tournament.

"It will be nice to do some-

thing like this to keep my mind off my classes," Thompson said.

Any student interested in doing something fun and active and getting a break from classes might consider trying laser tag on April 25, Watson said.

For more information on the tournament, contact the Wellness Center at 405-682-1611, ext. 7310.

For more information on Mobile Laser Forces or the laser tag equipment, visit www.mobilelaserforces.com or call 405-259-9300.

Watson said the laser tag tournament will draw a pretty good crowd on campus, as it usually does; however due to the lack of interest in the Paintball Tournament that was scheduled for later this month, it has been canceled.

UPCOMING INTRAMURALS EVENTS

April 21: Boys Basketball begins. For more information, call the Wellness Center at 405-682-1611, ext. 7310.

April 25: Laser Tag begins. There is no fee. For more information, call the Wellness Center at 405-682-1611, ext. 7310.

April 27: Home Run Derby begins. For more information, call the Wellness Center at 405-682-1611, ext. 7310.

April 27: Wiffle Ball Tournament begins. For more information, call the Wellness Center at 405-682-1611, ext. 7310.

April 28: Chesapeake Swim-Meet begins. For more information, call the Wellness Center at 405-682-1611, ext. 7310.

April 29: Paintball Tournament canceled. The Capture the Flag Tournament has been canceled. For more information, call the Wellness Center at 405-682-1611, ext. 7310.

All event news is due
Monday by 5 p.m. for
inclusion in the next issue.
email
sportswriter@occc.edu.

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AT A MARCH 29 MEETING, TLC AGREED THEY STILL OPPOSE FIREARMS ON CAMPUS

The Leadership Council votes on guns, tuition

ALEX SAMIA

News Writing Student

To combat proposed state legislation that would allow students to carry firearms on campus, The Leadership Council has passed an ongoing resolution expressing opposition to guns on campus.

The guns-on-campus issue starts at the beginning of the year and is discussed every year, said Chris Hanna, TLC chair.

"It's our way of saying, 'Hey guys, we still think this is a bad idea,'" Hanna said.

The Leadership Council met on campus March 29.

The council is comprised of representatives from each student club, as well as a small number of at-

large members.

Gun safety is not a subject taken lightly by Oklahoma colleges and universities.

"All the college presidents from every university and college in the state have come out against any legislation that would allow firearms in their campus," Hanna said.

However, he said, it still comes as a surprise every year whenever a bill is written to allow guns on campus in the hands of people other than security professionals.

In addition to gun safety, TLC also endorsed the tuition increase that probably will take place for the fall.

TLC members supported the college administration by voting to accept a 5 percent tuition increase for fall

if necessary to maintain the college's level of funding.

State funding is being cut from OCCC and other secondary institutions, Hanna said.

"In order for us to keep up with it, there is a need for us to increase tuition unfortunately," he said.

"No more than \$5 for every \$100 you spend," Hanna said.

He said that 5 percent increase would maintain OCCC at its current level to keep up with all the basic necessities such as lights, health insurance for employees, and keeping the school clean.

During TLC's last meeting on April 26, awards will be presented to outstanding clubs. Their names will be displayed on a plaque for students to see.

Contact TLC at <http://occc.campusgroups.com/tlc>.

Scam: Letters asking for money sent out

Continued from page 1

mation or scholarship information from OCCC will "always" include the "@occc.edu" suffix if sent via email, or the college's name and emblem if received through physical mail.

McMurtrey said students who are unsure about the validity of information can bring a physical copy to the Financial Aid office or forward suspicious emails to financial-aid@occc.edu.

For more information regarding financial aid or scholarship opportunities, contact Financial Aid at 405-682-7525.

Financial Aid Assistant Director Linette

McMurtrey said an official-looking document such as the one at right, from an organization called the Student Financial Resource Center, has been popping up in mailboxes nationwide, including in those of some OCCC students.

The letter states students can fill out the enclosed forms to apply for the "maximum merit and need-based (scholarship) programs" available.

McMurtry said the organization also requests an enclosed "processing fee" of \$59, which she said, is a tell-tale sign of a scam.

"Students can get information about, and apply for, all of those scholarships for free," she said. "We don't want our students paying for services available to them for free."

STUDENT FINANCIAL RESOURCE CENTER™
www.studentctr.org • email: info@studentctr.org • 1-888-730-APPLY

Filing Status:	Filing Deadline:
Pending	June 30, 2012

JANE DOE, OR PARENTS OF
1234 UNIVERSITY LANE
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73139-2520

Student Profile Number:	College Attending:
451-017271	OPEN - ALL COLLEGES

It is time to apply for all available 2012-2013 financial aid programs to help pay for your college education. Students who did not qualify to receive federal student aid (Pell Grants, FSEOG, or Work-Study) or need additional financial aid money should submit applications to other existing financial aid programs.

Students can receive federal, state, local, national merit, and need-based financial aid assistance regardless of their academic performance or family's income level. Students can use the free money to pay for tuition, room and board, fees, books, computers and transportation.

Submit the enclosed Student Aid Profile Form (SAPF) to proceed with the 2012-2013 Student Financial Resource Center (SFRC) program and apply for the maximum merit and need-based financial aid programs. The funds from these financial aid programs are not student loans and do not have to be repaid later.

The SFRC Processing Department must receive all completed Student Aid Profile Forms no later than **June 30, 2012**. Fill out the form, enclose the refundable processing fee, and mail both in the pre-addressed envelope. The entire processing fee will be returned to students who do not qualify or do not receive financial aid money.

Parents may also complete and sign the enclosed form with accurate student information. Late Student Aid Profile Forms will be accepted for students with special circumstances; however, not all financial aid funds will be available. Apply early because most financial aid programs have strict deadlines with limited funding.

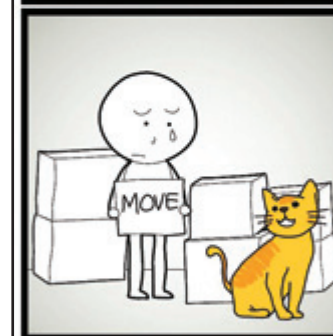
For more information, contact the Student Financial Resource Center (SFRC) at 1-888-730-APPLY (1-888-730-2775). Students can also visit our website at www.studentctr.org or email us at info@studentctr.org with any questions.

Student Financial Resource Center
SFRC - Processing Department
2012-2013 Academic Year Financial Aid Programs
Enclosure (1) - Student Aid Profile Form (SAPF)
CW/ta

* General number assigned by Student Financial Resource Center (not a 550) • * This Program is sponsored by Student Financial Resource Center organization • * Student Financial Resource Center's Internal Billing status • For more information see reverse side JOHN DO

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CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Houston we've got a problem



CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

Oklahoman Jerry Elliott, lead retrofire officer of the Apollo 13 mission, gave an inspirational speech to a crowd of students and faculty on April 12, a day before the anniversary of the famous words, "Houston we've got a problem." Elliott delivered a message about thinking big and believing the impossible is possible. It only takes more time and effort to accomplish.

COMMUNITY | Professor says psychological abuse is most common

Expert talks about mental abuse

SHALYA ALLEN
News Writing Student

When it comes to abusive relationships, the most damaging effects come from psychological abuse rather than physical abuse, said Jennifer Haplin, professor of nursing at OCCC. She gave a workshop on Healthy Relationships on campus March 27.

This workshop was a part of OCCC's Brown Bag Series, and drew about 20 participants.

Although Haplin said that psychological abuse is the most common, physical abuse comes to mind first because it's easier to see the damage.

Any use of physical pain or force, or even threats of these, is considered physical abuse, Haplin said.

Although physical abuse can be a one-time thing, chances are that it will happen again, she said.

Haplin provided resources like the OKDHS-Abuse Hotline (1-800-522-3511) to help victims of abuse. She said anyone who is being abused should seek help, or counseling, immediately.

Haplin used PowerPoint slides and a sense of humor to cover the hour-long presentation. It ended with a raffle.

She described the different relationships that people encounter which range from friendships to intimate relationships. She said everyone that

a person knows falls into one of these categories.

Haplin described the six components of a healthy relationship: respect, honesty, trust, fairness, equality, and good communication.

All six of these must be present in any type of relationship.

To keep a relationship healthy, Haplin said, you have to be able to form thoughts into words and you have to be able to listen.

You must also know how to find a line, and make sure it is not crossed. You have to know your partner and their limits, and you must be mindful of these limits.

Although no relationship is 100 percent happy all the time, she said the major red flags are large imbalances of power, and extreme use of guilt.

Before closing the seminar, Haplin spoke about family planning and disease prevention. She explained different types of contraception and the effectiveness rates on each one.

Haplin also stressed the importance of getting tested for sexually transmitted diseases, and being completely honest with your doctor.

Alissa Dawson, a graphic communications major, said that she attended the workshop because she saw the flier, and wanted to learn more about it.

She said the most important thing that she

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Picnic in the Park with Trio

Trio Student Support Services is hosting a potluck picnic for students and their families from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, April 23, at Earlywine Park located at 3033 NE 119th. For more information, call Karolyn Chowning at 405-682-1611, ext. 7620.

OCCC to host U.N. video conference

The Multicultural Business Club is hosting a video conference with the United Nations from noon to 1:30 p.m. April 24 in the Bruce Owen Theater. Students are encouraged to attend the meeting.

Free Immunizations for children

The "Caring Van" will be at the OCCC Family and Community Education Center, Wednesday, April 25, from 2 to 4 p.m. to provide free immunizations to children. The program is open to the community.

Brown Bag: Interview Tips

Student Life is hosting a workshop at noon Wednesday, April 25, in CU1. The discussion topic will be "Interview Tips." Bring your lunch. For more information, call Student Life at 405-682-7523.

Arbor Day/Earth Day Celebration

The Green Task Force will be hosting Arbor Day/Earth Day celebrations from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, April 26, in the Main Dining area of the union. There will be informational booths as well as free tree saplings and door prizes.

Graduate Pinning Ceremony

There will be a graduation pinning ceremony and reception from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday, April 30, in CU1, 2 and 3. Everyone planning to graduate this spring semester is invited to receive a pin.

**All Highlights are due
Monday by noon
for inclusion in the next issue.
email your event to
communitywriter@occc.edu.**

learned was to get regular STD testing, and not be embarrassed about it.

History major Alexa Prince said that she attended for her Success in College and Life class, but would take it over even if it weren't mandatory.

Prince said that the workshop helped teach her what's healthy and what isn't.

For more information on healthy relationships, contact Jennifer Haplin by email at jhaplin@occc.edu or by phone at 405-682-1611, ext. 7193.

For more information on upcoming Brown Bag events contact Student Life at 405-682-7523, or visit the calendar on their website at www.occc.edu/studentlife.

Records: Timeliness interpreted in different ways

Continued from page 1

Steven Bloomberg, who oversees the Aquatic Center, said OCCC's failure to fill the records request was unintentional.

"As it pertains to the Open Records Act in Oklahoma, if someone places an open record request, you do not have to put something together that wasn't prepared previously," Bloomberg said.

"It isn't that there's an unwillingness to do it. It's probably that the information we have from a historical perspective may not include a profit-and-loss statement."

Getting the Aquatic Center financial records had been the goal of previous Pioneer editor Christiana Pearce-Kostura, who worked for the Pioneer in 2005 and 2006, before Marketing and Public Relations took over the job of processing Open Records requests.

In a telephone interview, Pearce-Kostura said she was told records for OCCC's Aquatic Center didn't exist after she filed a request for several documents, including the cost of chemicals.

"There have to be records for chlorine," Pearce-Kostura said. "You just don't run down to the store with cash to buy chlorine."

The intent of the law is stated in the act: "It is the public policy of the State of Oklahoma that the people are vested with the inherent right to know and be fully informed about their government." Since OCCC is a state-funded college, it falls under the law.

It is common for the Pioneer to receive police criminal, medical, and incident reports and other records that are two to three weeks old.

In one recent case involving funding for student clubs, more than a month passed before Jordan sent an open records request to the department maintaining the records.

On Feb. 10 the Pioneer filed a request for information pertaining to spending by student organizations and budgeting for club activities.

More than a month later, on March 28, Student Relations Director Erin Logan said she received the records request and passed it that same day to Marion Paden, vice president of Enrollment and Student Services. The request was filled just a few days later by Paden's office.

"We do our best," Paden said. "We are more than willing to help out."

In another instance, the Pioneer has been waiting since Feb. 15 for a 2011-2012 OCCC Staffing Plan booklet, a document created in June 2011.

PROFESSIONAL OPINIONS

OCCC attorney Nancy Gerrity said neither the Oklahoma Open Records Act nor any Oklahoma court case provides a "maximum amount of time" by which a public body must respond to an Open Records Act request.

"Rather, the Act requires that a public body must provide prompt and reasonable access," Gerrity said in an email statement.

When reporters suggested the age of the record indicates whether the requester is given prompt and reasonable access, Gerrity said it was not.

"Instead, you must look at the length of time between the date the record was requested and the date the record was made available, and then consider the factors discussed above," she said.

Gerrity said the determination of what constitutes prompt and reasonable access is made on a case-by-case basis.

"Factors to be considered include the nature of the request for public records, the number of records requested and the format sought, and the efforts for the public body to compile those records."

Director of Communications for Attorney General Scott Pruitt, Diane Clay, said the Oklahoma Open Records Act does not provide a specific time for responding to records requests other than the provision that it must be "prompt, reasonable access."

"We are often asked what time frame would be reasonable," Clay said. "In most cases where records are easily accessible and clearly not exempt from the act, a response within 7 to 10 days, if not the day of the request, seems reasonable."

Student Press Law Center Executive Director Frank D. LoMonte said, in terms of the time to produce a police incident report, the law allows an agency a reasonable time to comply.

"If the record is sitting right where someone can easily grab it, then even a week is not reasonable," LoMonte said in an email message from his office in Washington, D.C. "You really have to ask what could possibly take that long."

"A police department ought to be able to find a recent incident report immediately on demand. A person who is victimized by a crime, for instance, ought to be able to walk into the police department and get a copy of the report about her crime handed right to her, not wait two weeks to get it in the mail."

LoMonte said it seems unlikely there is so much crime on OCCC's campus that the campus police need days to sort out incident reports.

"If the police are taking in excess of a

week to provide an incident report, that means either that their record keeping is a disaster and if it is, someone should be fired — or that they simply are putting your request on the back burner and giving it low priority."

Joey Senat, Oklahoma State University associate professor for the School of Media and Strategic Communications and former Freedom of Information Oklahoma president, said prompt and reasonable access is defined as only the time to locate and complete the record.

"When Drew Edmondson was [Oklahoma's] attorney general, he was adamant that 'in most instances, open records requests should be responded to on the spot.'"

Senat said, in the case of campus police, the Open Records Act is just one law that must be followed.

"Even if the state's Open Records Act did allow for a week, federal law doesn't. The Clery Act requires OCCC to add crimes to the daily crime log within two business days of the initial report to the campus police."

WHO FILLS OPEN RECORDS?

Pioneer reporters also believe there are instances when the OCCC Marketing and Public Relations Department has failed to comply with another part of the Open Records statute, Section 24A.5, which states: "All records of public bodies and public officials shall be open to any person for inspection, copying, and/or mechanical reproduction during regular business hours."

OCCC's policy, as stated to the Pioneer, is that all open records requests are to be made through the Marketing and Public Relations office — more specifically, through Jordan when he is available, and other staff when he is not.

On March 14, Pioneer Lab Director Ronna Austin asked Marketing and Public Relations employee Michael Burchfield who in that office was available to fill open records requests that day after being told Jordan was out of the office. Burchfield answered, "no one."

He said Jordan was on vacation until Monday, March 26, and the remainder of the Marketing and Public Relations staff would be out of the office starting the next day, Thursday, March 15 — two days before OCCC's spring break started.

Burchfield was made aware of a possible Open Records Act violation if the office had no one available to fill Open Records requests during business hours. The Pioneer was then able to file open records requests with another employee on Friday, March 16.

Gerrity said she was not aware of

any instance in which the college has failed to accept records requests during regular business hours.

"The Act requires a public body have at least one person available to release records during business hours. 51 O.S. 24A.5(6)," Gerrity said.

"However, the Act also provides a public body may establish reasonable procedures which protect the integrity and organization of its records and to prevent excessive disruptions of its essential functions. 51 O.S. 24A.5(5)"

LoMonte said an agency definitely couldn't declare a "public records vacation" just because employees of the Marketing and Public Relations department are away. He said this speaks to the low level of importance OCCC places on being accountable to the public.

"The duty to produce the records falls on the agency and not on any one particular employee," LoMonte said. "Arrangements should always be made to cover this responsibility, just as arrangements undoubtedly are made to cover other essential responsibilities when someone is away."

"It would never be acceptable to say that the lights are going to stay turned off for a week because the electrician went on vacation ..."

Senat said not having an official available to provide public records is a violation of the Oklahoma Open Records Act.

"The statute requires OCCC to designate at least one employee to release records during regular business hours," Senat said. "This isn't a new requirement, and it's clearly stated in the statute."

Senat said if OCCC refuses to abide by this requirement, then citizens should contact Oklahoma County District Attorney David Prater about filing a complaint.

Senat said OCCC administrators act as though they are "running a high school or a private college."

"Students, faculty and other taxpayers are entitled to know about what happens on campus, particularly when it involves police," Senat said. "But OCCC officials are treating students with the same disrespect that many high school administrators show for their students."

"OCCC administrators don't respect you enough to follow the law. They seem to be lying to you in some instances, as well as blatantly violating state and federal laws."

For more information on Oklahoma's Open Records Act visit FOI Oklahoma at www.foioklahoma.org or www.foioklahoma.org/OpenRecords.pdf.