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EDITORIAL

CONFORMITY CAN LEAD TO BAD CHOICES

Editor Bryce McElhaney says the recent racist incident at the University of Oklahoma stems from lack of individuality. Read his thoughts inside.

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NEWS

COLLEGE LEADERS SPEAK TO STUDENTS

President Paul Sechrist recently spoke to classes of journalism students and then, took questions from the group. Turn inside to see what he had to say.

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SPORTS

SWIM MEET RECORDS SET AT OCCC

Oklahoma Baptist University was the big winner at the 2015 NAIA Swimming and Diving National Championships. Read more inside.

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COMMUNITY
CHRISTIANS ON CAMPUS OPEN TO EVERYONE

Club Treasurer Nehemiah Kennedy says anyone can join the campus group. Those who do will find help with their studies and with transfer information. Learn more inside.

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OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PIONEER

MARCH 27, 2015

PIONEER.OCCC.EDU

COVERING OCCC SINCE 1978

Sunshiny day



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

English literature major Sabra Conkling sits outside OCCC's main entrance on March 11. "I'm writing my first draft about advertising and its influence on society," Conkling said. OCCC offers numerous locations inside and outside for students to relax or study.

OCCC aims to meet student needs

Returning student says much has improved in the past 10 years

JORGE KRZYZANIAK
 Senior Writer
seniorwriter@occc.edu

Janelle Lawson recently came back to OCCC after a 10-year absence. The pre-education major said a lot has improved since she had to put her education on hold a decade ago.

"(Back then) they didn't have anyone telling students how to do an administrative withdrawal," she said. "So ... I had to do some cleanup when I got back.

"Now they do a more excellent

job at encouraging students to remain in college. They have programs.

"They express to the students about withdrawing if they are going to get out of classes. That has all changed."

A recent report from Western Governors University and The SOURCE, an online resource that discusses community college issues, trends and strategies, explored some of the biggest hurdles community colleges face.

The report lists keeping up with advancements in educational technologies and college readiness or remedial course placement of students, among the greatest challenges.

The biggest issue community

colleges face, according to the report, is providing incentives and support systems to help keep students like Lawson in school.

Institutional Advancement Executive Director Lealon Taylor said OCCC works to meet those challenges on every level.

"I believe OCCC is a leader among community colleges in looking at breaking down any barrier that's a hinderance to a person trying to receive a college education," he said.

"I know that the leadership team, the professors and the staff here at OCCC are constantly thinking about how we can break down barriers so our students can feel comfortable coming here, where they can afford an education, where they

can afford textbooks."

Taylor said OCCC is continually thinking of ways to help students succeed.

"What barriers are there through the enrollment process? What barriers are there through the financial aid process and the advising process? Are there scholarships available? And how can we make it all a seamless system? These are questions that OCCC addresses constantly," he said.

Lawson said she has found the addition of the Success in College and Life courses to be of great benefit.

She said she believes these classes and the professors who

See OCCC page 7

OPINION

EDITORIAL | University of Oklahoma incident shows need for individuality

Be yourself, not everyone else

After seeing the leaked video of University of Oklahoma fraternity Sigma Alpha Epsilon chanting a racist song, it made me reflect on the whole dynamic of college fraternities and sororities. It made me wonder how many people on the bus were uncomfortable with the chant or baffled by the frat's ignorance or, better yet, how many of the students chanted along with gusto. Perhaps the fraternity was singing the



**BRYCE
McELHANEY**

song out of tradition – as many frats and sororities are known to have. In any case, there seems to be one thing these traditionally cultish frats and sororities carry on through generations: conformity.

Conformity can be a dangerous thing, especially for groups who thrive on it. According to www.thedailykind.com, people are like pack animals. When individuals join certain groups, they try to satisfy the group's norms or standards and when this happens, anything an individual does that's not a part of that norm or standard becomes threatening.

"Here is why [conformity] is dangerous: because critical thinking goes out the window. Logic goes out

the window. We don't stop and think about what we are doing because everyone else is doing it. We forget to question whether it is right or wrong and we just follow the other sheep," the site said.

It's 2015, and I would like to think that we've experienced enough hatred, violence, discrimination and even genocide to know that racism isn't acceptable, and conformity is a trap.

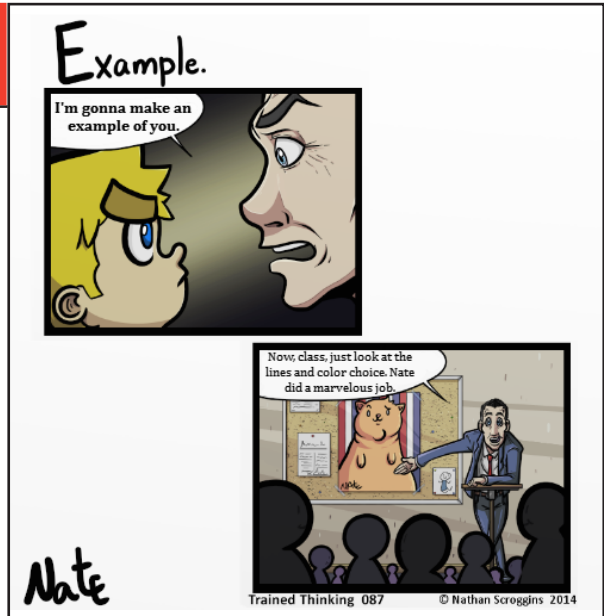
If World War II era Germany decided Jewish genocide was the right answer, they obviously weren't tolerating critical thought or logic.

Instead, they relied on their leader at the time to tell them what's right. In no way is this a healthy way of thinking. We've grown up listening to our parents preach to us the values of being an individual with our own independent thoughts.

Then somewhere along the line, students end up going to college with a paid network of friendship where freshmen are hazed and humiliated based purely on tradition.

According to www.psychologytoday.com, conformity also can be an unconscious decision to fit into a crowd, meaning the students could have felt the situation was justified because it was a group decision and not their own.

"Conformity is the tendency to align your attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with those around you. It's a



powerful force that can take the form of overt social pressure or subtler unconscious influence. As much as we like to think of ourselves as individuals, the fact is that we're driven to fit in, and that usually means going with the flow," the site said.

If it weren't for being in the fraternity, some of those students could have been outstanding advocates of social equality, but instead they found themselves on a bus chanting a racist song without thinking twice. The point is, minds are easily influenced, and it's essential that we place more importance on individuality and critical thought, rather than following patterns and listening to everything that we're told.

—BRYCE McELHANEY
EDITOR

LETTER TO THE EDITOR | State Health Department says colorectal cancer is the third most diagnosed cancer in both men and women

Those age 50 and over should schedule colonoscopy

To the Editor:

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer is preventable through routine screening. In Oklahoma, colorectal cancer is the third most diagnosed cancer in both men and women. In 2012 nearly 2,000 Oklahomans were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and in 2012 and 2013, approximately 750 of them died. Nationally in 2011, more than 135,000 people in the U.S. were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and nearly 52,000 died from the disease.

Colorectal cancer is a malignancy, or type of cancer, affecting either the colon or the rectum. The colon and rectum are the lower portions of the digestive system. Most colon cancers begin as tiny polyps, which are common growths in the lining of the colon, and over time these polyps become cancer-

ous. Colon cancer screening tests work by detecting polyps or early stage cancers followed by removal of the abnormality. Through a procedure called a colonoscopy, screening for and removal of polyps reduces the risk of developing colorectal cancer by up to 90 percent. Early detection of cancers that are already present in the colon increases the chance of successful treatment and decreases the chance of dying as a result of the cancer.

Also, lifestyle changes may reduce the risk of developing colorectal cancer. OSDH recommends the following healthy habits to help prevent the disease:

- Adding a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains to your meals.
- Quitting use of all tobacco products.
- Moderating or eliminating alcohol use.
- Exercising at least 30 minutes a day.

- Maintaining a healthy body weight.

People over age 50 should speak with their health care provider about screening for colorectal cancer, and anyone with a family history should talk to their health care provider about screening at an earlier age. African-Americans and American Indians may consider screening at an earlier age due to the fact that they are statistically at a greater risk of developing the disease at an earlier age.

The National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable initiative, "80 percent by 2018," has dozens of organizations committed to a shared goal of having 80 percent of adults aged 50 and older being regularly screened for colorectal cancer by 2018.

For additional information, call 405-271-4072 or bradonn@health.ok.gov.

—OKLAHOMA STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

PIONEER

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Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the PIONEER, the college or the publisher.

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 no more 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 <http://pioneer.occc.edu>.

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

BAND REVIEW | '90s band to reviewer, "Do you like me? Does anyone care?"

Secret, shameless love professed

It's not that I'm ashamed. It's just that there's a few things men don't talk about very much. Mere words are hardly powerful enough to describe the sensations within the deepest, darkest parts of our hearts.

Among those things we keep bottled up are the horrors of combat, the foolish chase of unrequited love, the shameful amount of tacos we eat when nobody is around to see and our unbridled, secret passion for the '90s hit musical group the Cranberries.

Don't even act like you don't love the Cranberries. There's no use hiding it anymore. The world has to know.

For anyone who has ever had any affinity for '90s music or for anyone who was young and angsty in those days, there is almost nothing that can resonate within you like the powerfully distorted, three-chord refrain of "Zombie."

Alongside tracks that served as epic anthems of teenage frustration and lost love were these strange, little throwbacks to '50s pop but done with overdriven power chords and a pretty Irish brogue. I'm a sucker for '50s pop and Irish brogues.

The singer for the Cranberries stole my heart with



the first note I heard Delores O'Riordon sing and when MTV piped her image into my home I began to love her so much it hurt. And when the hurt just

wouldn't go away, I'd be like, "did you have to let it linger?" Yes. Yes, she did.

She was weird and beautiful and passionate and powerful and her voice was like that of an angel — a sweet, fist-fighting angel. (Her speaking voice was actually completely unintelligible.)

She was different from everything else the music industry had tried to

market to me.

When I discovered that beautiful women could convey all the heartache and angst, frustration and loneliness that I as a 13 year-old boy was experiencing, it shattered my every conceived notion of everything.

I was 13. I didn't know a lot of stuff.

Suddenly all these teenage feelings didn't feel like the giant social goiter I'd made them out in my head to be.

I got a pair of Doc Martens and I've been cool ever since. Thanks, Cranberries.

Rating: A+

—JORGE KRZYZANIAK
SENIOR WRITER

NEW PRODUCT REVIEW | TOMS shoes adds new line of athletic shoes that work on every level

Cooler kicks socially conscious

I love products that give back, products that give to the greater good. Most of the time, I'll go out of my way to find a company that contributes to a cause. One of my favorite companies is TOMS, which gives a pair of shoes to a person in need for each pair purchased.

I've been buying TOMS for a few years now and they have never disappointed me. I usually buy various colors of the Classic Slip-ons, because they're reliable, comfortable, durable and go with pretty much anything I wear.

With all the winter weather, I decided my feet needed some extra warmth besides the one layer of fabric from my beloved grey TOMS. So, I purchased some TOMS Grey Tribal Boots, which proved to be another great life decision.

My latest TOMS purchase has been my favorite so far.

I received an email one afternoon from TOMS that said they now sell athletic shoes. I almost could not contain my excitement. Reading those words was

like a dream come true. The next day, I was online ordering the brand-new TOMS Black Tribal Woven Women's Del Rey Sneakers. I had no problem paying \$79, because a decent pair of Nikes is easily \$90, plus, TOMS give to someone in need.

A couple days ago, my TOMS came in and I ripped open the box to try them on. I put them on my feet and they practically started smiling.

They had the typical TOMS design, but had laces and looked similar to Nike Free Runs.

The sneakers are light, fluffy and fit my feet perfectly. They have the comfort of Classic TOMS with the support of athletic shoes.

Most shoes need to be broken in at least a few times before feeling like they could be worn for an extended period of time. But, my feet felt right at home in my new tribal print sneakers.

These shoes are the best of both worlds. They make my feet happy and they make someone on the other



'2048' puzzler fun for all

I have numerous games on my iPhone.

From "Quiz Up" to chess, there are few games I don't enjoy playing.

But the puzzle game "2048" is, without a doubt, the game I love playing most.

The objective in "2048" is to slide numbered tiles on a 4x4 grid to combine them and create a tile with the number 2048.

Tiles slide as far as possible in the chosen direction until they are stopped by either another tile or the edge of the grid.

When two tiles of the same number collide, they will combine into a tile with the total value of the two tiles that collided.

So when two tiles with the number four collide, they will combine to create a number eight tile.

After each turn a new two or four tile will appear, even if the tiles you move don't combine.

When you run out of space on the grid, the game is over.

If a player's tile reaches the value of 2048, the game is won and players can continue to play beyond the 2048 tile to reach higher scores.

There is nothing bad to say about this game. "2048" is my go-to game when I'm bored and have nothing else to do.

It's extremely simple and easy to use.

And if you get bored or stuck, you can enter the game's challenge mode.

All I can say about challenge mode is this — it's very difficult.

In each challenge you have to collect a selection of tiles and you'll have a set number of moves to get them in.

There are currently 64 challenges.

All-in-all, the game isn't particularly challenging and doesn't require an abundance of skill or concentration to win.

And while "2048" isn't as popular as it was last March, the game is nonetheless a fun, competitive experience anyone can enjoy playing.

—ETHAN COOPER
PHOTOGRAPHER

side of the world happy.

Rating: A

—LAUREN DANIEL
ONLINE EDITOR

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

PROGRAM REVIEW | Show on USA Network about religions and conspiracies catches curiosity

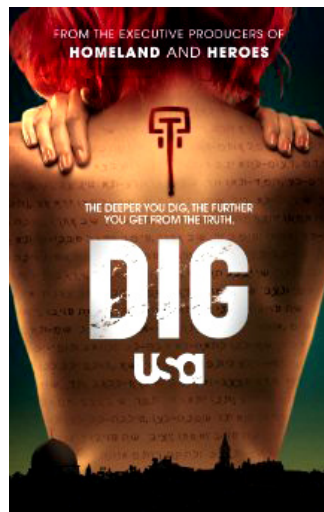
'Dig' brings new direction to prime-time television

Every time I turn on the television there seems to be another new show coming out. Every one I see reaffirms my belief in people losing their creativity. More series of crime, supernatural beings and families with too much money for their own good are filling up the channels.

A couple of weeks ago I finally saw something that took a new direction instead of the average and ill-humored adult cartoons plaguing the minds of couch potatoes everywhere.

On USA Network, a 10-part series called "Dig" aired for the first time. While this show has a conspiracy going on just like many other series, the show's plot takes on religious conspiracy.

With a main setting in Jerusalem, one of the holiest



purely red calf.

A young Orthodox Jewish man is instructed by

places on Earth, FBI agent Peter Connelly, played by Jason Isaacs, starts to investigate the murder of an American girl. As the investigation takes place, it unveils the city's dark and historic secrets that could change history.

While the introduction of the murder case is taking place, it cuts out to two different countries.

One is Norway where a rabbi said the prophecy has started after the birth of a

the elders to watch over the calf until it can be sent to Jerusalem.

The other place is New Mexico, where a little boy named Josh is being held in captivity by a creepy priest in a secret compound in the middle of the desert. Although it does not disclose what role the boy holds, the priest is shown talking about Josh being ready for his destiny after studying his entire 13-year life.

While the premier wasn't as suspenseful and intriguing as I thought it was going to be, it was enough to make me want to see it through at 9 p.m. every Thursday.

It could just be that religions and conspiracies catch my attention, but it was enough to catch my curiosity as to how it will play out.

Rating: B

—KATIE AXTELL
COMMUNITY WRITER

PRODUCT REVIEW | Xbox 360 still alive and kicking after six years

Game console opens gateway to fun

In June 2009, as a reward for completing middle school with great grades, my parents gave me a brand new Xbox 360. The grades slipped after that, but I digress.

Fast forward to almost six years later, and that same Xbox 360 is alive and kicking it. Well, barely. The disk tray jams from time to time, and the disk drive barely works anymore.

Plus the HDMI output stopped working about two years ago, and the external wireless adapter I had to purchase before it became a built-in feature of newer Xbox 360's (RIP \$120) has barely worked since I bought it. And my hard drive died, so I recently lost five and a half years of game data, making me resort to saving all my games on a flash drive.

So yeah, I guess you could say my Xbox has seen better days. But, it does still work, even if only just.

Unfortunately, that is not all of my frustration. Adding to the hardware malfunctions, over the past six years I have had to spend a significant amount of money on batteries for controllers and a \$60 yearly fee just to play the

games online with friends. Not to mention countless system updates to fix an OS problem that ended up creating two more problems.

That being said, I have sunk too many hours, days, weeks, months, etc. into playing games only to speak badly about the thing that runs said games.

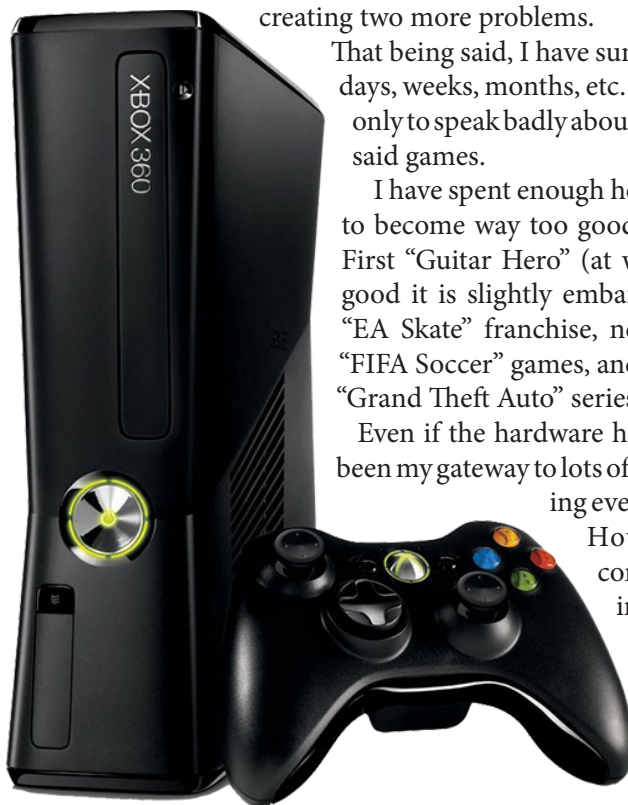
I have spent enough hours playing games to become way too good at some of them. First "Guitar Hero" (at which I became so good it is slightly embarrassing), then the "EA Skate" franchise, next "Call of Duty," "FIFA Soccer" games, and most recently the "Grand Theft Auto" series.

Even if the hardware has problems, it has been my gateway to lots of fun, and to becoming even more of a hermit.

However, with this console almost kicking the bucket, I will be glad to spend \$400 to replace it with its newer and hopefully physically superior counterpart, the Xbox One.

Rating: B

—CLAYTON MITCHELL
SPORTS WRITER



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.

TOP 20 MOVIES

Weekend of March 20 through March 22
www.newyorktimes.com

1. *The Divergent Series: Insurgent*
2. *Cinderella*
3. *Run All Night*
4. *The Gunman*
5. *Kingsman: The Secret Service*
6. *Do You Believe?*
7. *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*
8. *Focus*
9. *Chappie*
10. *The Spongebob Movie: Sponge Out of Water*
11. *McFarland, USA*
12. *American Sniper*
13. *The Lazarus Effect*
14. *Fifty Shades of Grey*
15. *The DUFF*
16. *Still Alice*
17. *Paddington*
18. *The Imitation Game*
19. *It Follows*
20. *Unfinished Business*

Program gives students competitive edge

CHLOE MOORES
News Writing Student

On graduation night, honors students walk across the stage wearing a gold stole over their black robes. Two students who have earned the right to wear those stoles say the extra effort is worth it.

Both Lisa Shaw, a pre-law sophomore at OCCC, and Sarah Landon, a liberal arts and Spanish major who graduated OCCC in the spring of 2014, agree the honors program has challenged them to find that extra drive within themselves.

They said the honors program not only gives students an opportunity to expand their knowledge in the classroom but also provides a plethora of benefits beyond graduation that otherwise would not be available to them.

For Landon, working while taking classes at OCCC with the added requirement of earning at least 15 hours of honors credit, posed a time management challenge.

"I had to find ways to motivate myself," she said.

Students are not penalized for not completing honors

projects, but they don't receive honors credit in the class if they don't.

Landon said she had to discipline herself to get the work done to earn 15 credits hours with honors.

Shaw said what sets the OCCC honors program apart from others is that it is flexible.

Honors students are allowed to make an honors contract in the classes of their choosing. The contract is made between the student, the professor and the honors program director.

The three must all agree on the criteria of an honors project and that the project is worthy of receiving honors credit.

Students who choose to take honors courses have the freedom to develop certain concepts in the class on a deeper level. For Shaw, this proved both challenging and rewarding.

"Being in honors allows you to say 'OK, I like this piece of the class, I want to develop that portion of the class further,'" she said. "It has helped tremendously with gaining interest in a course, which sometimes can be tough to do."

Shaw and Landon are confi-



dent that the time put into their honors work will continue to reap benefits.

"I believe my work in the honors program allowed me to receive the President's Award for Excellence, as well as make me eligible for tuition waivers which have helped me save money towards a four-year degree," Landon said.

"It helped me be taken more seriously when I began to talk to transferring advisers."

For students who are unsure about applying for the honors program, these two students have some advice.

"Number one, you need to identify your reasons for wanting to do honors," Shaw said. "Honors is completely rewarding if you would like to stretch yourself or challenge yourself educationally."

The coordinator of the honors program is Professor Nina Smith, who teaches English as well.

"Working with Professor Smith is a really strong motivator if you need direction or motivation to take the first jump into honors," Landon said.

"She is definitely with you every step of the way to help you maintain perspective."

Smith said the honors program is all about the students.

She said the most rewarding part of being in the honors program is the growth of the students as they go through this process.

"They start seeing the bigger picture, the bigger opportunity, the bigger everything," Smith said. "That is exciting."

One of the many memorable honors projects Smith recalls is that of a student who made an honors contract in her voice class in music. The student studied a particular aria from a specific opera.

"She did her research about how three different sopranos interpreted that aria," Smith said.

"She wrote her evaluation

of the three interpretations of the aria, and then she sang and recorded her interpretation."

Landon is currently a student at the University of Central Oklahoma and plans to graduate with a double major in liberal studies and Spanish.

Shaw will graduate from OCCC after this semester and is currently looking at the University of Oklahoma and Harvard law school.

In order to apply for the honors program, students must have either an unweighted GPA of 3.5 if they have completed fewer than 12 hours of college coursework, a 22 or higher composite ACT score, or a 3.5 cumulative GPA of college coursework if students have 12 or more credit hours.

Additionally, students must have at least 30 remaining hours before their associate degree is completed.

The application requires an essay explaining the reasons for applying and the abilities or characteristics that would make the student successful in the program.

For more information, call Smith at 405-682-1611, ext. 7141, or at nsmith@occc.edu.

Honors classes encourage critical thinking

BRYCE MCELHANEY
Editor
editor@occc.edu

OCCC's Honors Program gives students the opportunity to grow academically, said Honors Program Coordinator and English Professor Nina Smith.

"In an (honors) class, you would do an extra project that gives you a deeper understanding of that course material," Smith said.

According to the webpage, OCCC's honors program offers the following:

- One-on-one academic interaction with instructors.
- Recognized academic distinction.
- Enhanced scholarship opportunities.

opportunities.

- Honors stoles worn at commencement.
- Earned Hs on a transcript.
- "With Honors" printed on transcript and diploma.
- Tuition Waiver opportunities for qualified applicants.

Smith said earning honors credit is more than gathering facts about a subject — it's about going through with the next step: critical thinking.

"I think knowledge in itself has value, but we want to elevate the students' knowledge, which is hugely revolving around critical thinking," she said.

Smith said professors who participate in the Honors Program with their students do it out of generosity.

"They do this and support the program because they love working with students who want to take that step up, who want to be challenged more, who want to go to that next step," she said. "That's what the Honors Program can provide ..."

Smith said one benefit of participating in the Honors Program is, it looks good on a résumé and sets students apart from their peers.

However, she said, the primary benefit is the joy of learning — the challenge of learning something new.

Being part of the program is a unique opportunity, Smith said, because of its design.

"It really gives any student who has the qualifications an

opportunity," she said.

Those include a 3.5 cumulative GPA and 12 or more completed credit hours, according to the OCCC Honors Program website.

Freshman who have completed less than 12 credit hours must have an ACT score of at least 22.

Also, students who are interested must have at least 30 credit hours left to complete, because it will take about 15 credit hours to use in the Honors Program, Smith said.

[It] doesn't cost them any extra money.

"It's a program that's here for the student," she said.

Smith said although honor students are not required to take classes only related to

their majors, they are advised to take at least some of their honors classes within their field of study.

The application process includes an application form, an essay, and a personal interview with the Honors Program coordinator. Ideally, students should apply to the Honors Program before completing 30 credit hours.

Smith said new students can learn more about the Honors Program during student orientation, and all students can get information at the website at www.occc.edu/honors.

For more information about the Honors program, contact Smith at 405-682-1611, ext. 7141, or nsmith@occc.edu, or visit www.occc.edu/honors.

President tells OCCC students ‘do what you love’

JESSICA MCCLUNG
News Writing Student

A room full of journalism students at OCCC heard the college president give his thoughts on leadership and success during an informal talk on March 5.

Paul Sechrist said luck can play a part.

“Success has to do a lot with being in the right place at the right time,” he said.

Sechrist reflected on his own journey beginning as a junior high school teacher, to then becoming a college professor. He spoke about his mindset during that time and still today.

“Some people will tell you to always position yourself for what’s next, to plot your way to success,” Sechrist said. “That was never my plan. I have always believed in being the best you can where you are.”

The president said the advice he has always given to be successful is to do the things you love and are passionate for.

“Being honest, caring about other people, finding a work worth doing, and doing something that makes a difference are important to those who want success,” he said.

Sechrist also spoke to the students about working to become the best leaders they can be.

“Getting an education is powerful to you and it can never be taken away,” he said.

Sechrist said the goal of the community college is to offer access and opportunity to all who want to gain knowledge, not just a select few.

On July 1, Sechrist will step down as president, after serving 10 years in the position. He said he hopes his legacy as president will be the increased focus on graduation for OCCC students. The benefits of a college education are greatest for those who earn a degree or credential, he said.

Sechrist said students should be selective of those they spend time with.

“Make sure you surround yourself with people who will light your candle when it goes out, and that you will light theirs when theirs goes out,” he said. “But also remember to carry around a box of matches because you might have to light your own candle sometimes.”

The president said one of the hardest things for leaders to do is admit when they are wrong.

“Always remember that it is rarely too late to do the right thing ...,” he said. “Take responsibility when things aren’t going right.”

In closing his speech to the students, Sechrist left them with some practical leadership advice.

“To be an effective leader, you have to be at your best most of the time,” he said.

Sechrist said people want a leader who is together and effective.

“People expect me to be physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually settled,” he said.

“They want leaders who are taking care of themselves.”

Sechrist emphasized that to be a good leader, you must take care of yourself, make sure you recharge at the end of every day, and know when you need to go to your place of rest and peace.

“My advice for leaders is that there are priorities in life and they start with you. Take care of yourself so you can take care of others.”

“Make sure you surround yourself with people who will light your candle when it goes out”

—PAUL SECHRIST
OCCC PRESIDENT



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

A room full of journalism students at OCCC heard the college president give his thoughts on leadership and success during an informal talk on March 5.

Registrar says students who enroll early will benefit

SPENSER SLOAN
News Writing Student

It’s that time of the year again — time to enroll for summer and fall classes.

Registrar Alan Stringfellow said those who want to continue their education at OCCC should be aware that it’s a good idea to enroll right away.

By enrolling early, he said, students can speak with academic advisers and faculty advisers who have the knowledge students need to get a degree.

“I would stress how important it is to get in early, start enrollment as soon as possible.”

New students will need to bring all official high school and college transcripts to the admissions office to get started, Stringfellow said.

In addition, he said, students should start enrolling as soon as possible to avoid lines and to get the class schedule they want.

Stringfellow said OCCC is exceptional at taking care of those students who have jobs and

“I would stress how important it is to get in early, start enrollment as soon as possible.”

—ALAN STRINGFELLOW
REGISTRAR

families outside of college, and need specific class schedules.

However, in order to get the hours that will work for the individual, it is always best to be the first in line, he said.

Some returning students may not be able to enroll right away because of enrollment holds caused by outstanding fees

or not providing correct official transcripts, Stringfellow said.

He said students who owe fees need to go see the bursar’s office where they can correct any issues.

Stringfellow said it’s important for students to get the correct official transcripts from their high schools or college and be sure they have the official seal from that school.

Aside from the regular summer and fall terms, students also can enroll in intersessions and Fast Track courses on the same date, he said.

For questions about enrollment, contact Stringfellow at astringfellow@occc.edu or call 405-682-7512.

Students can drop or add classes online through the MineOnline student account accessible from mineonline.occc.edu or in person at the registration area located on the first floor in the Main Building near the stairs.
For assistance, call 405-682-7512.

OCCC ranks high in headcount; low in tuition, fees

BRYCE MCELHANEY
Editor
editor@occc.edu

President Paul Sechrist recently told a class of students, “Oklahoma City Community College is one of the largest single campus community colleges in the nation.” Statistics show he’s right. OCCC is one of 992 public community colleges across the U.S.

According to community-collegereview.com, OCCC’s student headcount averages around 14,000, with 36 percent enrolled as full-time students and 64 percent as part-time students. The national average is around 1,300 students, 45 percent of them full-time and 55 percent part-time.

OCCC’s student population has increased by 12 percent over the past five years, according to the site.

Business and Finance Vice President John Boyd said there can be a direct correlation between the size of the campus and the student headcount.

“We have 160 acres and a million square feet,” he said.

“We do have the largest

single campus occupancy and, in terms of students, we’re one of the largest in the nation.

“Most campuses with the number of students that we have, have multiple campuses.”

It’s not the only way OCCC compares positively to other community colleges, Boyd said. He said OCCC is below the national average in terms of cost.

The average tuition at OCCC is \$2,476.60 for 30 credit hours. Nationwide, most community colleges tuition rates average \$6,000 for the same hours.

According to the Fiscal Year 2015 report, OCCC also offers the lowest tuition of all two-year colleges in the state — \$118.50 per credit-hour cheaper than Rose State College, the second lowest.

Tulsa Community College’s tuition is more than \$2,600 for 30 credit hours, while OSU-OKC and Redlands Community College both aver-

age a little more than \$3,000. When it comes to fees, OCCC — at an average at \$763.50 for 30 credit hours — ranks higher than Redlands

Community College, Rose State and OSU-OKC. At \$896 per 30 credit hours, only Tulsa Community College charges higher fees than OCCC.

However, the overall cost of OCCC is still cheaper when fees are added at \$3,240. The other state community colleges start at \$3,255 and go up to more than \$3,500.

Boyd said, in addition to the low costs, part of what makes OCCC a better campus is the open environment.

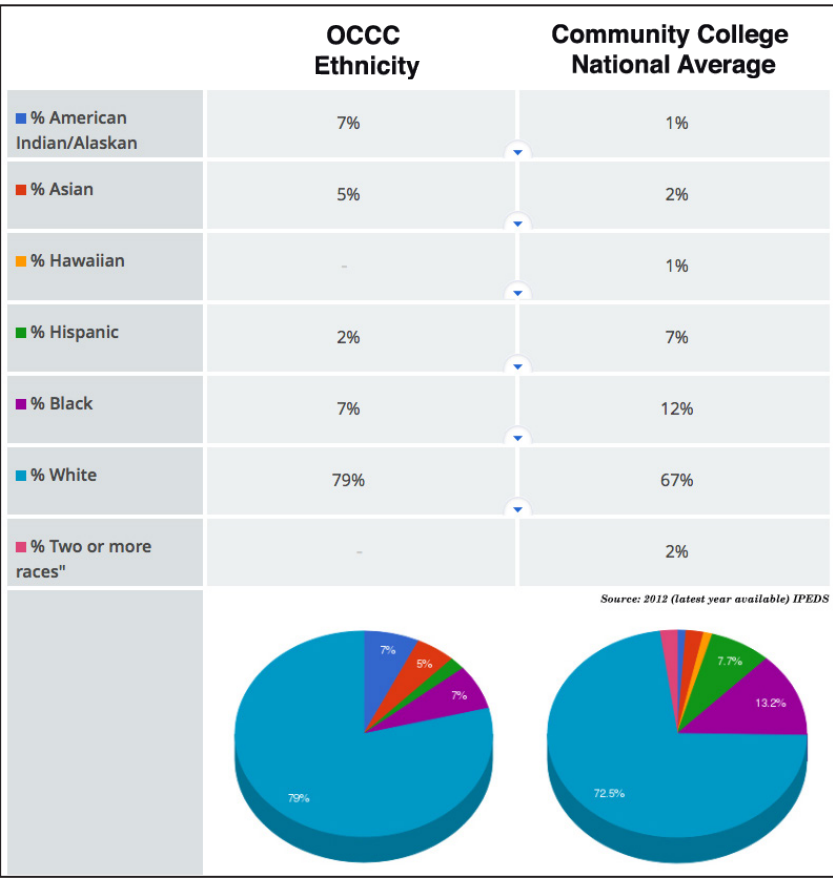
“I think we promote diversity, [and] ... we have a welcoming culture,” he said.

He said OCCC’s location also contributes to it being a better campus than some other community colleges.

“From where I sit, I think we have a modern campus with adequate parking, we have affordable price, we have a diverse campus environment, we have open admissions, we have a beautiful campus,” he said.

“That’s what makes Oklahoma City Community College better in some ways than most.”

For more information about OCCC’s national standings, visit www.community-collegereview.com/school-overview/1033.



OCCC ranks above the national average in many ethnic categories according to data collected in 2012 by Communitycollegereview.com, a company that tracks data for U.S. colleges. Using a search feature, site visitors can find out how any college compares to national averages in categories such as cost, diversity, student-teacher ratio and more.

OCCC: Community colleges a great starting point for many

Continued from page 1

teach them are meeting the challenge of keeping students in school and helping them maintain good GPAs.

OCCC President Paul Sechrist said community colleges also often provide more support than their four-year counterparts with free tutoring for students and labs that offer the latest technology.

Tim Whisenhunt, OCCC’s Technology Support Services director, said the college works hard to affordably meet those challenges.

“I think we are always looking for new technology and applications, but we must make strategic decisions when purchasing technology,” he said.

“With the funding available for purchasing technology, the practice in Technology Support Services has been to attempt to equip as many classrooms and labs with the needed equipment as possible. In that respect I believe that we have succeeded.”

Whisenhunt said OCCC has about 200 classrooms and labs where faculty and students can present information in a variety of ways.

“As other needs arrive, the rooms are adapted to meet the needs of the instruction style or needs of the class,” he said.

Lawson said she also has an additional challenge that students who live on university campuses will never face — commuting. She said she

deals with uncertain variables such as heavy traffic, weather and other vehicle-related issues during her commute from northwest Oklahoma City.

On the flip side, Lawson said, students at commuter colleges may have an advantage over those who live in dorms on campus.

She said those who attend OCCC must demonstrate the will to get themselves to campus — often from areas far away. She added that students at four-year colleges may lose focus on the task at hand as they’re caught up in the other aspects of college life.

“Their focus is going to be on football,” she said. “Their focus is going to be on their sorority and becoming pledges. It’s the

wrong mindset to start out your education in. Community college is the best way to get started on the right track.”

Sechrist said some students may want that university experience. He admits two-year college may not be for everyone.

“While there are some advantages to attending a community college, such as lower tuition, smaller class sizes, and generally more support through free tutoring and labs, there are some aspects that most community colleges may not offer which may be part of a university and some students want or need.

“For example,” he said, “to some, having competitive athletics is important. Others may want to play in the univer-

sity orchestra. Others may see dorm or residential life as an important part of a collegiate experience.

“Each student needs to make a decision based on costs, what programs are offered and what beyond academics a student wants or needs in the experience.

“Community college is a great choice for many students, but definitely not for everyone.”

Lawson said she is glad she decided to start her education at a two-year school.

“I suggest students always start out at a community college because they are going to experience a different mentality,” she said. “People are more serious about their education. It’s good to be around that.”

SPORTS

EVENT
NEWS

Raising the bar



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Nursing major Alshat Olaniyan performs squats in OCCC's Recreation and Fitness Center located in the Wellness Center. The Wellness Center provides many fitness areas free to students with a valid OCCC ID. For more information, visit www.occc.edu/rf/wellness.html.

SPORTS | Swimmers from several schools broke records at the annual swimming and diving event

Bison dominate NAIA Swim Championship

CLAYTON MITCHELL
Sports Writer
sportswriter@occc.edu

Oklahoma Baptist University was the big winner at the 2015 NAIA Swimming and Diving National Championships, hosted at OCCC's Aquatic Center on March 4 through 7. For the third consecutive year, the Bison, who went into the competition as favorites, handily won both the men's and women's overall national championships.

The Bison men took home 11 of 20 individual event championships, and amassed 876.5 overall points to win the men's title, beating out second place Olivet Nazarene University from Bourbonnais, Ill., which finished with 575.5 overall points. Savannah College of Art and Design took third with 403 points.

OBU's women won 13 out of 20 individual events, and finished with 745 overall points. They were followed by SCAD with 481 points and Brenau

University from Gainesville, Ga., who were not far behind with 439.

OBU also won at least a share of all eight awards given at the championships, which included men's and women's participants from 19 and 25 schools respectively, from around the country.

Laura Galarza (OBU) shared the Women's Swimmer of the Year award with Christine Tixier (Biola University, La Mirada, Calif.). Daniel Ramirez (OBU) claimed the Men's Swimmer of the Year title. Both Bison swimmers also won Swim of the Meet honors for their respective genders.

On the diving side, Kristen Brimage (OBU) was chosen as Women's Diver of the Year, while Zak Rowton (OBU) was named Men's Diver of the Year. OBU won all four diving events.

With his team's success, it came as no surprise when OBU's Sam Freas won both men's and women's Coach of the Year awards.

Tixier set three new records at the meet, in Women's 200-Yard Individual Medley, Women's 100-Yard Butterfly, and Women's 200-Yard Butterfly. In the 100-Yard Butterfly, Tixier set the new record of 54.25 in the preliminary round and almost broke that record in the finals, finishing with a time of 54.34.

Other notable record setters included SCAD's Joel Ax, who was .3 seconds away from beating the record of the Men's 500-Yard Freestyle by three full seconds.

Ax finished with a time of 4:21.93, beating the original record of 4:24.63. Ax and Tixier were the only record setters who were not from OBU.

The same event is scheduled to take place at OCCC's Aquatic Center again next year, on March 2 through 5, and in 2017 and 2018 as well.

For more information, Recreation and Fitness Department at 405-682-7860.

SPRING 2015:

- Students with a valid OCCC ID can use the Aquatic Center free of charge. The Aquatic Center features two pools, and an 18½-ft. deep diving well with 1- and 3-meter spring boards and 5-, 7- and 10-meter platforms. For more information, visit www.occc.edu/RF.

- OCCC Group Fitness classes are offered at a variety of fitness levels and are spaced conveniently throughout the afternoon and late evening hours. Classes are free to OCCC students with a valid ID. See more at www.occc.edu/rf/cr-group-fitness.

- The Recreation & Fitness Center is open to students, faculty, staff and community members. The center features a 15,000-square-foot gym with two basketball courts and one recreational volleyball court, a cardio room with three treadmills, two cross trainers and two recumbent bikes as well as a weight room featuring a complete circuit of Cybex equipment and free weights. Students with a valid OCCC ID can use the facilities free of charge. For more information, visit www.occc.edu/RF or call 405-682-7860.



Scan the QR code with your smart phone to be directed to a list of OCCC Intramural events, complete with the most current updates.

(Free QR code reader apps can be found online or in app stores on smart phones. Follow the directions for the app you download.)

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

Paramedic graduate gives EMS department high marks

JARON SPOR

News Writing Student

OCCC has one of the best Emergency Medical Science departments in the state, said Zach Davis, who graduated from the program in December as a paramedic.

He said those interested in becoming a firefighter, paramedic, or anything else in the EMS field should look into the program.

Davis said the training was “very good.” Although he did not have a job in the EMS field prior to graduation, he now works for an ambulance service.

OCCC’s EMS Department Director Ron Feller has 30 years of experience in the field. He has been running the department full-time for a year.

Feller said students spend about 40 percent of their training time in labs where they have all types of training equipment and exercises to help them learn. These lab tools range from high fidelity mannequins that do the same thing that a human would do to new equipment to practice getting trapped people out of a car, he said.

The department also has a decommissioned ambulance parked in the hallway outside of the lab which they use for simulations purposes, Feller said.

EMS students practice by putting simulated patients—other students—on a gurney and into the ambulance where they work on them until the instructor says the ambulance has arrived at the hospital.

The EMS department offers four levels of training: Emergency Medical Responder, Emergency Medical Technician, Advanced Emergency Medical Technician, and Paramedic, Feller said.

He said each step will build off the one before.

Feller said EMRs can offer basic first aid while EMTs can do oxygen administration and some minor medications.

Advanced EMTs can provide intravenous therapy, advanced airway skills and first-line cardiac medications, he said.



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

OCCC’s Emergency Medical Services department has a decommissioned ambulance parked in the hallway outside of the lab which they use for simulations purposes. EMS students practice by putting simulated patients—other students—on a gurney and into the ambulance where they work on them until the instructor indicates the ambulance has arrived at the hospital.

Paramedics can do more advanced medications and airway treatment. A paramedic is basically a “doc in a box,” Feller said.

Paramedics practice under the licence of an emergency room physician, he said.

Everything a doctor will do for a patient at the emergency room, the paramedic will do to the patient until they can get to the doctor.

Feller said there are approximately 200 students in the program. Most find jobs with ambulance services after graduating, he said. Fourteen graduating students in December were employed prior to graduating.

“OCCC EMS students are some of the most sought after paramedics in the state,” Feller said.

Before being the head of the EMS department at

OCCC, Feller worked for the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center in EMS for children and spent 20 years in the Air Force as a medic.

Feller has worked in hospital emergency rooms, intensive care units, and medical surgical units.

He also worked for EMSTAT, an ambulance company in Norman and started teaching while he was in the military.

Feller said he got hooked on teaching after volunteering to teach one class because of his fear of speaking in front of individuals.

Feller said he now spends about three hours a week in the classroom, and said he substitutes quite a bit.

There is no teaching requirement for his position so the majority of his time is spent as an administrator.

Feller can be contacted at 405-682-1611, ext. 7343.

Incident reports include missing wallet, injury

JORGE KRZYZANIAK

Senior Writer

seniorwriter@occc.edu

In latest incident reports, police responded to missing property and a run-away pool deck cleaning machine.

A missing wallet, reported to campus police on Thursday, Feb. 19, was promptly returned to the student—who suspected it had been stolen—by a good samaritan.

A student reported he had placed his wallet and backpack

in a Testing Center locker that day. He said he did not understand how to secure the locker door properly and had left it unlocked.

As Officer Jeremy Bohannon reviewed surveillance footage of the area, a visitor to the college, unnamed in the report, brought the missing wallet to police.

She said she and several others had difficulty using the lockers correctly.

She had seen someone opening several lockers and saw

the wallet fall from one of the lockers.

The unnamed visitor brought the wallet to the campus police department. The owner of the wallet confirmed it was his property and that nothing was missing.

A part-time worker in the Aquatic Center was injured when a Zamboni machine, used for cleaning the pool deck, ran over his foot.

It was reported on Friday, Feb. 27, that a 7-year-old boy visiting the facility “saw the

Zamboni machine and pushed its start button.”

The Zamboni, under its own propulsion, ran over the heel of a lifeguard and left an abrasion. After treating the wound with an icepack, the injured worker refused further medical attention and returned to work.

Some information was redacted from the reports under the direction of Marketing and Public Relations Director Cordell Jordan who said names are redacted “according to OCCC PD Standard Operating

Procedures involving information released and information withheld.”

To obtain a copy of the procedure, email cjordan@occc.edu.

To contact campus police, call 405-682-1611, ext. 7747.

For an emergency, use one of the call boxes located inside and outside on campus or call 405-682-7872.

www.twitter.com/OCCCPioneer
www.facebook.com/OCCCPioneer

CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Action

Film and video production major and student worker Montana Mooney manages the film equipment room located at OCCC's VPAC. She checks out video cameras and other gear to students working on class assignments.



ETHAN COOPER/
PIONEER

COMMUNITY | Campus group offers Bible studies as a refuge to refresh

Christian club welcomes all

KATIE AXTELL
Community Writer
communitywriter@occc.edu

The Christians on Campus club is available to help students study as well as help their relationship with God, said club treasurer Nehemiah Kennedy.

"The most important thing in our lives is to know God and to love God, so that's the primary goal in our club," he said.

Kennedy said the club wants to help students be able to focus on their studies while at the same time, keeping a focus on their beliefs.

"As a student a lot of times you're behind on a lot of things and studying so [the club] is just to help focus on God," he said.

He said the club also helps students who plan to transfer to other universities make connections with others who can help them. He said Christians on Campus clubs are active at Oklahoma State University, University of Central Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma, and other out-of-state



universities.

"A lot of people, when they go to a different university, don't know anyone there, but there's a lot of people we can connect them with for food, homes and studying," he said.

Kennedy said the club holds College Conference each semester, a major event where Christians on Campus clubs from other schools meet.

They also meet on the OCCC campus for Bible studies each Monday and Tuesday.

"Every Monday night we have a ministry series called Solid Ground," he said. "It's a topical

thing with 14 topics that we're going through this semester. Every week we cover a different topic. Whatever we cover on Monday night, that's what we'll [discuss] on Tuesday."

Club member Daniel Mujuni said the Bible studies are important.

"[It] gives students a refuge on campus during school and [helps] them refresh," Mujuni said.

Kennedy said anyone is welcomed to the club's events.

"We're not a specific church, so anyone who wants to come can come."

Christians on Campus meet at noon every Monday in room AH 1C3 and at 12:30 p.m. every Tuesday in room AH 1C5.

The Solid Ground ministry series is 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. every Monday night in room 1X5 in the Main building.

For more information, contact the Christians on Campus club at christiansoncampus@my.occc.edu or Club President Kaie Huizar at kaie.huizar@gmail.com.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Student to Student mentoring available

Student to Student mentoring will take place at noon Monday, March 30, in CU3. All students are welcome to attend for free mentoring. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Open mic for students to share creativity

An Open Mic event will take place at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, in CU3. All students are invited to share their talents such as songs, poems, or compositions. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Meteorologist guest giving weather presentation

Chief Meteorologist David Payne is giving a wild weather presentation at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 1, in CU 1, 2, and 3. Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Regional Food Bank place of service trip

Student Life is hosting a service trip from 8 a.m. to noon Friday, April 3, to the Regional Food Bank. Students must register and spots are limited. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Mary Chapin Carpenter performing at OCCC

Mary Chapin Carpenter will perform at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 30, in the VPAC. Ticket prices range from \$28 to \$52. Special guest Aoife O'Donovan also will perform. For more information, contact the Cultural Programs office at culturalprograms@occc.edu or 405-682-7576.

Cards Against Humanity hosted by student clubs

The Agnostics, Atheists and Freethinkers club will play Cards Against Humanity with the Gamers Guild at noon Monday, March 30, in the CU. All students are invited to attend. For more information, contact AAF at aaf@my.occc.edu or facebook.com/aafatoccc.

Solid Ground Ministries on Monday nights

Christians on Campus will meet at 5:30 p.m. on Mondays in room MB1X5 for a "Solid Ground" ministry series. All students are welcome to attend. For more information, contact the Christians on Campus at christiansoncampus@my.occc.edu or club president Kaie Huizar at kaie.huizar@gmail.com.

Christians on Campus to meet each Monday

Christians on Campus will host a Bible study at noon on Mondays in room AH1C3. The Bible study will be over the "Basic Words of Life and Truth." All students are welcome to attend. For more information, contact the Christians on Campus at christiansoncampus@my.occc.edu or club president Kaie Huizar at kaie.huizar@gmail.com.

All Highlights are due Monday by noon for inclusion in the next issue. Email your event to editor@occc.edu or drop by the Pioneer office located in AH 1F2.

CLASSIFIEDS

Pioneer classified advertising is free to all enrolled OCCC students and employees for any personal classified ad. Ad applications must be submitted with IDs supplied by 5 p.m. Fridays prior to the next publication date. For more information, call the Ad Manager at 405-682-1611, ext. 7674, or e-mail adman@occc.edu.

FURNITURE

FOR SALE: 19" CRT television in working condition. Great for a gaming TV or in a child's room. \$25. Text 405-818-0083 for pictures or more details.

MISCELLANEOUS

MATH TUTOR: I have experience working with struggling students. Call 405-476-7498.

FOR SALE: This space for \$8 per week. Place your business classified today and reach thousands of potential customers. Up to seven lines. Call 405-682-1611, ext. 7674, or email adman@occc.edu.


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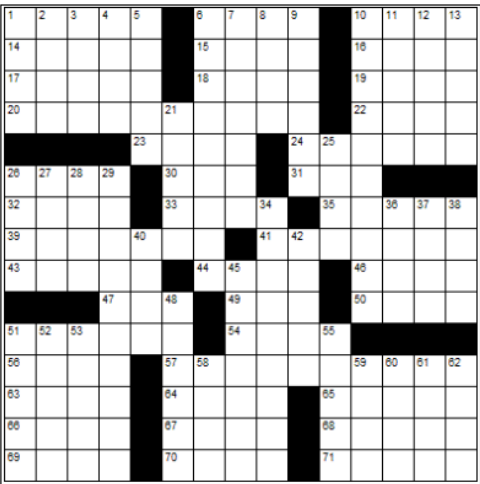


Available at Planned Parenthood.
www.ppfa.org/ppfa

 **Planned Parenthood**
1-800-230-PLAN

WEEKLY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1. One who is excessively proper
 - 6. Hats
 - 10. Not barefoot
 - 14. Abatement
 - 15. Salt Lake state
 - 16. Decant
 - 17. Colonic
 - 18. Blend
 - 19. Graphic symbol
 - 20. Air
 - 22. Ancient Peruvian
 - 23. Disable
 - 24. Admiration
 - 26. Laugh
 - 30. Not bottom
 - 31. East Indian tree
 - 32. How old we are
 - 33. Within
 - 35. Somersaults
 - 39. Detective (slang)
 - 41. Melodious
 - 43. Old photo color
 - 44. Lairs
 - 46. No
 - 47. Central
 - 49. Compete
 - 50. Chew
 - 51. A statistical interval
 - 54. River of Spain
 - 56. By mouth
 - 57. Handwritten document
 - 63. Murres
 - 64. Goddess of discord
 - 65. Forbidden
 - 66. Classify
 - 67. 3 times 3
 - 68. Negatively charged particle
 - 69. Sea eagle
 - 70. Labels
 - 71. Fine thread

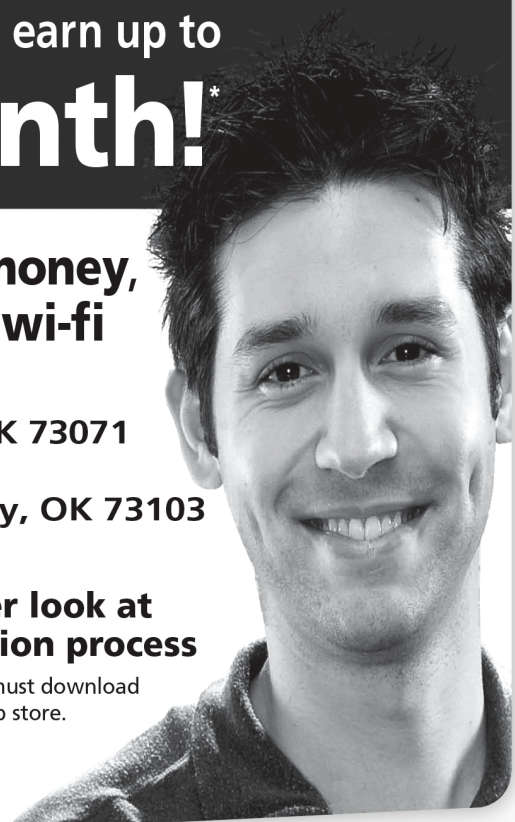



- DOWN**
- 1. Urgent request
 - 2. Lease
 - 3. Bit of gossip
 - 4. Japanese wrestling
 - 5. Muscle contraction
 - 6. Padded
 - 7. Try
 - 8. Twosome
 - 9. Astute
 - 10. A light shower
 - 11. Hunting dog
 - 12. 1/16th of a pound
 - 13. Gloomy, in poetry
 - 21. Terrace
 - 25. Clods
 - 26. Crones
 - 27. Chills and fever
 - 28. Rope fiber
 - 29. Acculturate
 - 34. Motorcoaches
 - 36. Computer symbol
 - 37. Dad
 - 38. Killed
 - 40. Salute
 - 42. Utilizers
 - 45. Latter part of the day
 - 48. To deprive of reason
 - 51. Drench
 - 52. Mistake
 - 53. A marker of stones
 - 55. In base 8
 - 58. Diva's solo
 - 59. Hindu princess
 - 60. Nile bird
 - 61. Swimming hole
 - 62. Anagram of "Note"

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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.

Suicide awareness workshop teaches prevention

CHRISTOPHER PLUNKETT
News Writing Student

It has been shown time and time again that the human capacity for compassion can — even in times of extreme duress — save a life, said Janey Wheeler in a suicide prevention and awareness workshop on campus Feb. 19.

Wheeler is a licensed mental health counselor on campus. She spoke to about 20 people.

Wheeler outlined the QPR strategy in helping someone who voices thoughts of suicide or speaks of hopelessness that might indicate life is not worth living. QPR stands for Question, Persuade, Refer.

Wheeler said people sometimes avoid questioning someone who might be having trouble for fear of saying the

wrong thing or not knowing what to say.

However, she said, the first step in QPR is to do just that — question.

She offered sample phrasing, such as: Have you been unhappy lately?

A more direct question might be: Are you thinking about suicide?

But in the end, how you ask isn't as important as asking period, Wheeler said.

"Many of those who attempt suicide often say, 'If just one person had taken the time to ask me if I was OK, I wouldn't have tried to attempt suicide.'"

If a person acknowledges having suicidal thoughts, Wheeler said, your goal is to persuade them to seek help. Then, refer them to profes-



sionals who can address the problem. Wheeler said OCCC has mental health counselors on staff to see students who may be in crisis.

Students can go directly to Student Support Services and ask to see a counselor, and they will be seen right away, she said.

Short-term mental health counseling is available on campus, Wheeler said. And short-term counseling is what is most often needed.

For longer term care, OCCC counselors specialize in re-

ferring students to exactly the help they need, she said. The counseling office can be found on the first floor of the Main Building. Counselors can be contacted at 405-682-7523.

Wheeler stressed that if you or someone you know or love, is thinking about suicide to not ignore it. People often need someone to acknowledge them and their suffering, and be there to listen. Not taking the time to ask can have dire consequences.

Wheeler said suicide is the second highest cause of death for the youth of Oklahoma, according to 2010 statistics.

She said that study showed, nationally, one out of every 15 high school student attempts suicide each year.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has volunteers and staff who answer calls all through the day and night, offering compassionate listening, crisis intervention, referral information and suicide prevention. They can be reached 24/7 at 1-800-273-TALK.

"Always remember to follow up on someone you refer to help," Wheeler said. "Let them know that you care enough to check up on them."

She said if a person is confiding in you and even allowing you to help them, this is very important. They have to believe you are being genuine.

If you wish to know more about QPR or other aspects of suicide prevention, Wheeler can be contacted at 405-682-1611, ext 7131, and can also be reached at janey.wheeler@occc.edu

President, employees take part in Maya Angelou tribute

KADI KREMER
News Writing Student

President Paul Sechrist brought two of his most prized possessions, books signed by Dr. Maya Angelou, to a tribute event in the poet's honor on campus March 6.

Sechrist opened the event, sharing his personal experience with Angelou.

He said he was among a group of about 25 students who attended a class taught

by Angelou at the University of Oklahoma.

"Maya Angelou has had a profound impact on me," Sechrist said. He said she began each class session by reading a section of her writing.

"A Tribute to Dr. Maya Angelou" was held in honor of Black History Month after being rescheduled from February.

Donna Jarma, OCCC professor, read "On the Pulse of the Morning," the poem that Angelou recited at President Bill

Clinton's inauguration in 1993.

When asked about her choice of readings, Jarma said "the inclusiveness of the poem speaks to me."

Jarma said the first time she heard the poem was during a live video of the inauguration that was playing in her class full of high school seniors. The whole class was stunned and speechless, and all stood up and applauded at the conclusion.

Angie Christopher, vice president of Human Resources,

read "And Still I Rise."

Learning Skills Professor Carlotta Hill recited "Phenomenal Woman," by Angelou. It dealt with women loving themselves as they are.

Arts Division Assistant Rochelle Mosby read "Alone," by Angelou. This poem addressed problems of feeling isolated.

Miss Black Oklahoma and OCCC Student Simone Mathenia, also made an appearance singing "I Know Where I've Been."

The tribute concluded with a presentation by Carlos Robinson, Admissions and Outreach adviser.

He showed slides of 10 quotes by Angelou.

As he went through the slides, he asked the audience of about 30 people to speak their mind about them.

The audience discussed the meaning of the quotes together, trying to better understand them and what Angelou was trying to say through them.

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