



# PIONEER

## Su Voto:



**FIRST TIME VOTERS:** Engineering major Aaron Galindo and bilingual banking and finance major Clarissa Casado registered on campus in preparation for November's general elections. *Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer*

**The fastest growing ethnic group will have 27.3 million eligible voters in the 2016 presidential elections.**

**ERIKA FIERRO**  
Staff Writer  
staffwriter4@occc.edu

Though Oklahoma's Hispanic population has grown to more than 378,000, far less than half of the Hispanic population's eligible voters cast ballots, an analysis by the Pioneer shows.

Projections show that 27.3 million Hispanics are eligible to vote in the 2016 presidential elections. Though the Hispanic population is the fastest growing ethnic group – both in the state and on a national level – Hispanic voters continue to lag behind other ethnic groups, with one of the lowest voter turnouts at the polls.

Only 48 percent of eligible Hispanics voted in the 2012 presidential election according to a study by the Pew Research Center. The same trend is visible in state.

Oklahoma is 25th in the nation in largest Hispanic statewide eligible voters. This means that 138,000 Hispanics are eligible to vote, compared to New Mexico

who ranks first with 40 percent of eligible voters.

"We have the numbers, we can make a difference but we have to educate the Latino community that their vote counts," said Arturo Delgado, the Laborers' International Union of North America Field Representative. "If the Hispanic community would go out and vote, the first Latina could be voted into office in Oklahoma."

Many times people think that because they're not a citizen they feel like they can't participate in the political process, Delgado said. "It doesn't matter, you can put a yard sign out, volunteer, or donate. It may not seem like a lot but when 30 people give that candidate



See VOTE Page 9

## EDITORIAL/OPINION

EDITORIAL | REDIRECTING FUNDS FROM PUNISHMENT TO REHABILITATION

## Vote yes on State Questions 780 and 781



There are less than 25 days until the November 8 election. On the ballot, you will find a number of important state questions to consider. Of those questions, the outcomes of SQ 780 and SQ 781 will be pivotal to lowering the prison populations of Oklahoma.

Vote YES on SQ 780 and SQ 781.

If SQ 780 is approved, simple drug possession and property crime offenses under \$1000 will be reclassified from felonies to misdemeanors. The measure was introduced in an effort to lower state prison populations and decrease the amount of state funds spent on Oklahoma prisons.

Ballotpedia defines a “yes” vote for SQ 780 as a vote “to reclassify certain property offenses and simple drug possession as misdemeanor crimes.”

A “yes” vote for SQ 781 is a vote “to use money saved by reclassifying certain property and drug crimes as misdemeanors to fund rehabilitative programs, including substance abuse and mental health treatment programs.” Although SQ 780 may pass on its own, the implementation of SQ 781 is contingent on the passage of SQ 780.

Oklahoma has some of the harshest laws in the nation regarding drug use. Oklahoma statutes say that a second offense of possession of marijuana is a felony, punishable by two to ten years in prison. If there is an “intent to distribute,” an individual can be incarcerated from two years to life.

These laws have contributed to Oklahoma having the second highest incarceration rate in the country. Our state also has the highest incarceration rate for women. The Oklahoma Department of Corrections says that the average incarceration rate is 132 women to every 100,000 in the state. In comparison, the national incarceration rate is 68.

In August of 2016, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections released information showing that the state prison system is at 104 percent capacity, with a total of 27,097 inmates in the state.

Of that population 26.3 percent of those inmates are drug offenders, and 23.3 percent have been convicted of nonviolent crimes.

If both SQ 780 and 781 are approved, there will be fewer Oklahoma inmates serving time for nonviolent crimes.

Ray Colburn of Seminole County is one of the hundreds who have suffered under heavy Oklahoma drug laws. “I was on five years probation for three grams of marijuana in 1991,” Colburn explained. “In 1995, I was stopped at a traffic stop and I had 26 grams of marijuana in one bag, no scales, no extra baggies, just one bag. And they charged me with intent to distribute.”

On his second possession charge, Colburn received a 30 year sentence. “It was a ridiculous sentence, 30 years for 26 grams of marijuana. Just ridiculous,” he said.

SQ 780 will affect crimes ruled under simple possession, but will not change classification for possession with an intent to distribute.

“I think the question [780] would be a good thing, but if we’re going to leave it to the discretion of the district attorney’s, we’re not going to get anywhere with it,” Colburn said. “These district attorneys and cops are wide open to call it intent to distribute. If they throw intent to distribute on you, you’re cooked. The district

attorneys have too much discretion, and it won’t help if they don’t change that.”

“It’s been a terrible thing for me. They wouldn’t give me a drug court or anything, and it has just kept on and on and on. I’ve lost most of my family ties and all of that,” he said. “Oklahoma needs to do something with their laws, because mine is just one story.”

Colburn is currently on parole.

Norma Sapp is the Oklahoma director of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. Sapp has followed Colburn’s case since 1991. Sapp’s history with marijuana advocacy began with an interest in hemp farming, which inspired her to pursue marijuana legalization. After years of working for reform, the pain and suffering of the families torn apart by incarceration fueled her desire for more change.

“Without 781 passing, 780 won’t work at all,” Sapp said. “If we don’t take the money that is realized from the savings of not locking up so many people and put it into county mental health facilities, and drug treatment, 780 won’t be beneficial.”

The Drug Policy Alliance reports that in 2014, the U.S. invested more than \$51 billion in the war on drugs. Meanwhile, a record high of 47,000 individuals died of overdose the same year. Without proper treatment and rehabilitation, drug addiction will continue to rage.

Opponents of the questions argue that the approval of SQ 780 and SQ 781 would increase crime in Oklahoma.

Tulsa County District Attorney Steve Kunzweiler denounced both questions in an interview with the Tulsa Beacon.

“If you are caught with methamphetamine today, if this new law passes, it would be a misdemeanor. Tomorrow, if you get caught with methamphetamine, it will be a misdemeanor,” he said. “Two years from now, a misdemeanor. You could have 55 arrests and convictions for methamphetamine and always have a misdemeanor.”

Possession of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, LSD, marijuana, MDMA/ecstasy, or PCP in the state of Oklahoma is illegal. Charges of possession regarding any of these drugs will be reclassified under State Question 780.

“These things are obviously a threat to our community because of what happens for these people who try to fund their drug habits, you have got to have some kind of what I call a heavy hand,” Kunzweiler said.

The abuse of illegal drugs ought to be treated as a matter of public health, not of criminal justice. According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 65 percent of all inmates meet the medical criteria for substance abuse, yet only 11 percent of US inmates ever receive treatment. Preventative measures against addiction and substance abuse are not being taken, therefore perpetuating the amount of ongoing addictions and repeat arrests.

SQ 780 and SQ 781 are a step towards the treatment and alleviation of drug addictions, instead of using expensive, punitive strategies that have not been effective for the nation.

Vote YES on SQ 780 and SQ 781.

—SOPHIA BABB  
EDITOR

We value your opinion.  
Send your letters to the editor to [editor@occc.edu](mailto:editor@occc.edu)  
and visit our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/OCCCPioneer](https://www.facebook.com/OCCCPioneer)



# COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

**MOVIE REVIEW | FILM EXPLORES INSPIRATIONAL PERSONALITY**

## Icon of Chickasaw Nation comes to cinema

Two worlds collide into one when Native American songs and stories are performed by the “bearer of the dawn,” Te Ata.

The movie “Te Ata” is about a Chickasaw woman who defied the status quo and opened the Chickasaw culture to the world.

Te Ata was raised in the Indian Territory during the time of Native American assimilation.

She watched others force her culture to change. She saw how Native Americans were not considered good enough for the regular American life.

Te Ata fought back.

She worked to educate people about the traditions of the Chickasaw Nation. She had a passion for entertainment. She used her talents to mend a broken relationship between the Chickasaw Nation and the United States government. She performed in front of the King and Queen of England and President Franklin Roosevelt.

Te Ata can be an inspiration for anyone. She did not let labels hold her back.

A Chickasaw woman, she took these labels and made them her signature brand.

She demonstrated great strength. No matter how many times she was rejected, she never gave up. This lead

to Te Ata to the opportunity that took her to Broadway..

Her performances consisted of morals that taught kindness and the love of the nature.

She inspired people to learn more about the Native American culture, and to see that Native American stereotypes were not true.

“Te Ata” is entertainment for all and definitely enjoyable for everyone in the family.

This film works as a movie for the family, the classroom or a date.

“Te Ata” was the perfect length to hold the audience’s attention, but long enough to go into the depth of her life and her career. It had quality cinematography and a well written story line.

This movie also features well known Native American actors, Gil Birmingham, Q’orianka Kilcher and Graham Greene. All the actors did a great job of portraying the lives of their characters.

“Te Ata” is a movie that is bringing the life of a great Native American woman back to public, and giving the public a chance to learn and remember the cultural stories and songs performed by Te Ata herself.

—RAVEN DIAZ  
STAFF WRITER



**Do you have an idea for a review? Send it to the Pioneer!**  
**Email to the Pioneer editor at [editor@occc.edu](mailto:editor@occc.edu)**

OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# PIONEER

Vol. 45 No. 06

Sophia Babb.....**Editor**  
Grace Babb.....**Senior Writer**  
Erika Fierro.....**Staff Writer**  
Raven Diaz.....**Staff Writer**  
Travis Forsyth.....**Sports Writer**

M. Scott Carter.....**Faculty Adviser**

Victor A. Pozadas.....**Art & Music Writer**  
Mateusz Gugalka.....**Videographer**  
Aaron Cardenas.....**Photographer**  
Benjamin Taylor.....**Staff Writer**  
Jorge Krzyzaniak.....**Lab Director**

7777 S May OKC, OK 73159	<b>phone:</b> 405-682-1611, ext. 7307	<b>email:</b> <a href="mailto:editor@occc.edu">editor@occc.edu</a>
<b>Pioneer Online:</b> <a href="http://pioneer.occc.edu">pioneer.occc.edu</a>	<b>Facebook:</b> <a href="http://www.facebook.com/OCCCpioneer">www.facebook.com/OCCCpioneer</a>	<b>Twitter:</b> <a href="https://twitter.com/OCCCPioneer">@OCCCPioneer</a>

The PIONEER is a student publication of Oklahoma City Community College through the Division of Arts. It is published bi-weekly during the 16-week fall and spring semesters and the eight-week summer session.

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 reserves the right to edit all letters and submissions for length, libel and obscenity. Letters should be no more than 250 words. Students must list a major. OCCC staff and faculty must list a 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](mailto:editor@occc.edu) with a phone number for verification included.

The PIONEER ONLINE also can be accessed at <http://pioneer.occc.edu>.



# From OCCC to the House: Here comes Mary

BRANDON KING

OCCC News Writing Student

Just a few years ago, Mary Newcome Hatch was a new student at Oklahoma City Community College.

Today, she is the Democratic Party's nominee for House of Representative District 54.

"I went to OCCC between 2010 and graduated in 2013," she said. "It was some of the best time of my life. It's what got me started to where I'm headed now with the House of Representatives."

Now an OCCC alumnus, Newcome Hatch is running for the District 54 seat in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. The seat is currently held by Republican Paul Wesselhoft, who is being forced to retire because of term limits.

Newcome Hatch faces Republican candidate, Kevin West, and Elizabeth Larios, an Independent. The seat is considered a must-hold for state Republicans.

Newcome Hatch said she knows the race is an uphill battle. But that fight, she said, is a battle worth fighting.

"I'm aware of the backlash of some of my policies that I want to enact," she said. "But I think they're important. I mean, corporate greed is corporate greed, right? But people will always be scared of change so that's why we need to do it slowly."

Newcome Hatch said education is a key component of her platform.

"There's plenty of topics that I feel strongly about but, if I had to pick the one that I felt the strongest about, it'd have to be towards the schools," she said. "With the education system the way it is now, it would be ridiculous to continue to fund private charter schools. We could, honestly, be funding public schools and educating the kids that need it. Educating the public is and should be one of the main focuses in this

campaign. Or any campaign for that matter."

She said she would also work to reform the state's criminal justice system and push back against what she called the involvement of religious practice in public school.

"I chock it up to my upbringing in Oregon," she said. "I was always raised in a family that was more liberal so you could imagine the cultural shock when I first came

to Oklahoma. That being said, I love this state very much. I think that's why I want to help it as much

as I want to."

Newcome Hatch pointed to her tenure at OCCC as one of the reasons she sought public office.

"It's funny to think that, at one point, I was a business major just getting my degree," she said. "Really, my goal was to get my degree so that I could better understand what was going on but I caught the political bug quickly."

At OCCC, Newcome Hatch mixed politics with her business classes. She and Jorge Krzyzaniak, another OCCC student and now lab assistant for the Pioneer newspaper, became active in the Occupy Movement.

"Jorge and I were like the 'Occupy Wall-Street' of



MARY NEWCOME HATCH Photo provided

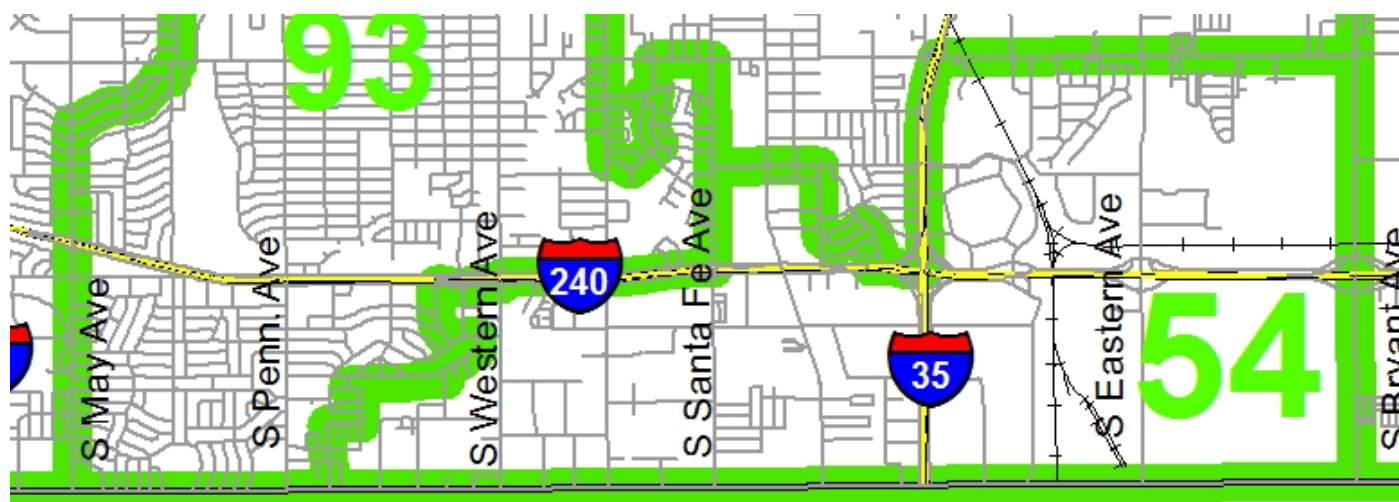
the school back when I was here," she said. "I'd have to say it was between that and a movie I saw when I was in my political science class called 'Iron-Jawed Angel' which was a movie about the struggles of the women suffragettes. If they could make change, I knew I could too."

After she had graduated from OCCC in 2013

Newcome Hatch attended the University of Science and Arts at Chickasaw. She graduated in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in a double major in history and political science. She also attended the Oklahoma Policy Institute's Summer Seminar in 2014.

"I urge anyone, regardless if you're looking for running for office or not, to go to this seminar. It teaches you to get your info from the people, not the gut," she said. "If anything, it solidified what I already believed. It made me realize that I had a purpose to run for office."

Oklahoma voters will make their choices for the state House of Representatives and dozens of other offices during the general election on Tuesday, Nov. 8.



**HOUSE DISTRICT 54:** Just East of OCCC, the district extends south to 4th Street in Moore and North to Interstate 240.



# Finding candidate info harder than it should be

VICTOR A. POZADAS

Art & Music Writer  
artwriter@occc.edu

Many Oklahoma candidates for office don't set a good standard when it comes to providing information to voters. The same is true for Oklahoma's 'official' websites.

An analysis by the Pioneer shows that many candidates don't provide specifics on their websites, often containing only safe statements on vague topics.

In smaller races, candidates use more traditional campaign methods such as door-to-door interactions and direct mail to provide information to voters. Still, many voters including 18 to 35-year-olds rely on the internet for political information.

"This is probably true for all the candidates websites, at least the vast majority that you go to, that you see these broad, vague statements about ideals and components with a fairly insufficient amount of detail," said Collin Walke, a Democratic candidate for House District 87 in central Oklahoma City.

Walke, like many other candidates in the Sooner State, doesn't provide an email or phone contact on his website, but instead has a "Get Involved" tab, which emails him directly and a Facebook page where people can message him.

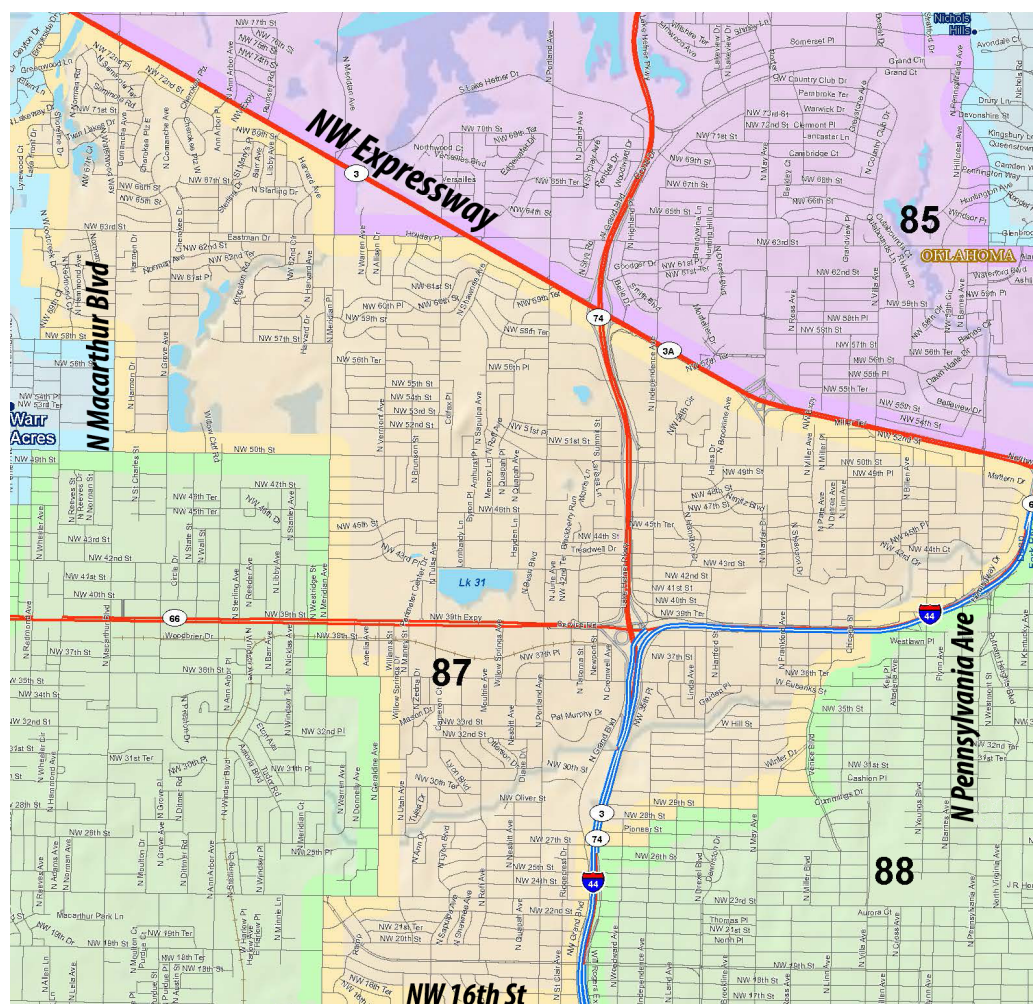
"People, we have found, don't usually dig into the details. If they want to find out more about you, they'll call you or email you," he said.

Walke isn't the only one. Oklahoma Senate and House websites do not have information on incumbents that aren't running for reelection, or candidates who are running for office.

Experts say there is no wonder why there is a disconnect between voters and their local districts. Oklahoma City Community College political science professor Sharon Vaughan said political information is sparse is mainly due to a candidate's efforts to appeal to largest number of people possible.

"The less details you have, the less you are going to make someone not vote for you," she said. "They appeal to these broad slogans like 'Make America Great Again. What does that mean? Most Americans are so disengaged in the political system that they wouldn't even know what policies to look for. We have a high level of political illiteracy."

Because Oklahoma currently has a Republican-



HOUSE DISTRICT 87: [okhouse.gov](http://okhouse.gov)

controlled state government, that party controls the House, the Senate, and the Governorship. This fall, voters will determine whether that trifecta will remain, with 18 seats in the state Senate and 71 seats in the state House of Representatives on the ballot.

In Oklahoma City, Walke, the Democratic candidate, faces Republican Candidate Bruce Lee Smith and Libertarian Candidate Elle Collins.

Smith, like Walke, does not provide a direct 'contact me' page on their personal websites. Libertarian Candidate Elle Collins runs her campaign through a Facebook page.

Smith's platform page is three paragraphs long. There are no plans, no explanations, and no specific information on what he'll do if elected for District 87. His argument is that voters can only choose "by comparing what he or she has done in their lives."

"I know how to work with others to get things done and how to make government more efficient," a posting on Smith's website says. Terms like "things" or "efficient" don't explain "how" and give little room to understand what it takes to make a difference in the district.

Smith said he wrote the platform page personally. "From what I understand, the website is just more general information about the candidate, so that's what I stuck with," he said. "When I talk to individuals at their door and stuff, I answer specific questions that they ask me. The mailing cards I send out are

more specific with stuff like that."

He acknowledges that some of his information is vague.

"When you're running for office you're essentially trying to get votes, and people can say anything to get a vote," Smith said. "This is an open seat and you have candidates that have never held office, so all you can go by is the history of the candidate. The rest is just rhetoric and talk."

Walke's website also has language that is vague and open ended. However, other pages within the website offer more specific information, categorized as education, veterans, infrastructure, and mental health.

Walke told the Pioneer he approved the edits on his "issues" page once he decided to run for office. He fought for the District 87 spot in 2014 and lost. Walke said state representatives "wield a bully pulpit" to speak out on issues that constituents have or need, but there is definitely a pattern for most candidates in leaving their stance on things and platforms vague.

"None of them provide sufficient detail in large part because, what part of education is important to each constituent? It's something that I can't address without writing a book," he said.

Earlier this year, Walke switched campaign teams from the primary to general elections and lost his official Twitter account with it. The missing contact page was an oversight, he said, that came with the switch in website and lack of website construction know-how.

Libertarian candidate Elle Collins uses Facebook to promote her campaign; however, Collins' most recent post is dated July 8, 2016.

In a press release issued on Collins' page, published on July 3, she described herself as being "ready to address such issues as education funding, legalizing cannabis, marriage and religious equality."

Collins told the Pioneer that she only use Facebook for the campaign, as a website would feel redundant.

"I chose to use social media as my primary mode of communication," she said. My husband Lukus and I wrote it together. He ran the 2012 OK grassroots campaign for Ron Paul, so I asked for his help."

None of the candidates in District 87 provide an easy, transparent manner of contacting them using websites or Facebook. Oklahoma state government websites do not have a streamlined way to see the past, present, and potential future of my district representatives, other websites such as Ballotpedia, the Oklahoma Election Board, or the Oklahoma Ethics Commission do have information about candidates seeking office and the candidates' fundraising efforts.







**ROCK BAND:** Christopher Dake's Epiphone Les Paul Guitar. *Victor A. Pozadas/Pioneer*

# OCCC student band ready to rock

**VICTOR A. POZADAS**

Art & Music Writer  
artwriter@occc.edu

In music, there's no better feeling than learning through recreating. The Oklahoma City Community College's Student Rock Band will shake the campus with a performance at 7 p.m. on Oct. 25 at the Bruce Owen Theatre.

The band, led by Guitar Instructor and Adjunct Professor Justin Mettry, will play a mix of hard rock, classic rock, and rock ballads. Members of the band include Brian Chilcoat on drums, Christopher Dake on guitar, Tyler Samson on bass, Conner Kennedy on lead guitar, and Mettry on vocals and backup guitar.

Mettry said he found music wherever life took him. And though his school did not have an arts program, Mettry found ways to play on his own.

"If you wanted to play music you had to join the marching band, that's really it. If you didn't play a horn or percussion or whatever it may be, you just couldn't play music in school," he said.

He started on the piano when he was six years old, but it was really the guitar that drew him to music. "It wasn't until I finally convinced my mom that I could take care of a guitar and that I would play it, you know, that it wouldn't go to waste. Little did they know it was just, from then on, just became a part of me," he said.

Mettry said he earned a Masters in Jazz Studies at the UCO Jazz lab. The competitive nature of the program, he said, was kind of a sink or swim situation.

That's when he met former OCCC Music instruc-

tor Jose Gabaldon, one of his peers who was going through the same motions. "We noticed we had a lot of the same influences and sort of followed the same path that had let us to the program," he said. "We started playing together on projects and formed a competitive relationship where you make each other better."

Gabaldon started teaching at OCCC and noticed a void in the music department, Mettry said. "OCCC had a Blues band and a Jazz band, but there's talent

here that can be nurtured, but no place for them. That's where it started," he said.

Mettry said the college's rock band has potential. "I think it's really promising. I've got a really good group this semester and I think we can do really cool things," he said. "They just need direction, and that's what we're here to do. My ambition is for some of the best musicians coming out of OCCC have been part of the rock group. A well rehearsed rock group can be a hell of a thing. Music can change lives."



**REHEARSING:** (Left to right) Connor Kennedy, Christopher Dake, Justin Mettry, and Tyler Samson practice on campus in preparation for the band's upcoming Oct. 25 performance. *Victor A. Pozadas/Pioneer*



# Q&A

## *With the rock band*



By VICTOR A. POZADAS

### Brian Chilcoat - Music Major

#### PDP Concept Maple Five Piece Drum set

Q: How did you get started with the band?

A: "My original major here was journalism, but I took music appreciation to fulfil a humanities credit and I decided music was my calling so changed my major to music. I'm also in choir and chamber choir. I was just walking through the building and I saw a flyer for it so I contacted Mettry. I was a little late to get enrolled for the semester, the current semester, but before the semester started he got with me and said 'You still interested?' and I said 'Yeah, of course,'"

Q: What got you started with music?



A: "It's more of a family thing, music is pretty big in my family. I was originally taught piano, I didn't really like it so I picked up drum set and listened to a lot of old music like The Beatles and stuff like that to learn. My grandmother played a lot of guitar, folk

music, my mom plays piano so they tried with the piano but I wouldn't have it."

Q: What do you have on your playlist right now?

"I listen to everything from classical all the way up to heavy metal, rock. Lately I've been listening to a lot of Jazz, Motown. Temptations is where it's at, The Supremes even, but that's where I want to get trained in Jazz blues and Motown, soul music."

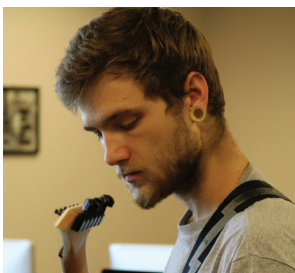
### Connor Kennedy - Music Major Jackson JS32T Rhoads Electric Guitar

Q: How did you find out about the band?

A: "I enrolled into OCCC, took a tour around everything and saw the flyers. Said 'You want to make heavy music?' I said 'Yeah,'"

Q: What got you motivated to start music?

A: "Started just listening to the radio, heard some bands that I liked. I've always, always, always wanted to play guitar, like I'd listen to Metallica mostly and I'd be like 'Yeah, I want to



sound like that.' So yeah, that's where it started. Music is pretty much the voice I've never really had you know?"

Q: Got any side gigs outside of the school band?

A: "I'm in my band The Black Diamonds. They're amazing people, I wish them the best, they're great, talented musicians and everyday whenever I can jam with them it's awesome."

Q: What do you listen to usually?

A: "Normally I listen to a lot of heavy stuff like Whitechapel, Die Heart, but bands that really got me into music probably be like more eighties, Metallica, Slayer, [Iron] Maiden, Megadeth, I love Megadeth. It's rock for the most part, but I sometimes like to listen to rap. I like rap, it's cool."

### Christopher Dake Epiphone Les Paul

Q: What make you join the band?

A: "I've actually already graduated from here, but I decided to take guitar over the summer just because I wanted to learn how to play music. I've never taken lessons before, in fact I kind of just played very casually, like we're talking very simple chords. After the first session, he told me to join the rock band, and I've never been in front of people like that."

Q: What were your expectations?

A: "I was expecting more rock not metal, I like metal too but it's not just what I'm used to playing. It's been a lot of fun and very intimidating but rewarding. So, yeah, I'm just kind of thrown in here."

Q: What got you into music?

A: "I was raised around it. My mother, she orchestrates in church so I was raised around everything from gospel, however I was raised really around things like the Beach Boys and sixties and seventies rock. They aren't my favorite, but I really do appreciate the Beach Boys, fantastic harmonies. I've always been into very melodic music."

Q: What bands are you listening to at the moment?

A: "Right now I listen to this band called Daphne Loves Derby, it's an absolutely amazing band they have such strange chords, and it's catchy, really catchy. I also listen to Mew and



been listening to a lot of Jazz lately because I've been trying to get better with the instrument and if you want to get better at an instrument you learn Jazz, lots of like, "50s and '60s, Barney Kessel stuff like that."



### Tyler Samson - Music Major

#### Squier Vintage Modified Jazz Bass by Fender

Q: How did you hear about the band?

A: "I was getting enrolled and they basically told me they had this and I signed up. He's my guitar teacher as well."

Q: How did you start with music?

A: "Like three or four years ago I got in a bunch of trouble and then moved to my grandparents house and my uncle plays guitar and drums. I picked up a guitar and started doing lessons when I was there. Then I moved back to Oklahoma, I kept going and picked up bass and piano afterwards."

Q: So your uncle got you into it?

A: "He picked up a guitar and I was like 'Let me see what you can do' and he started picking out Stairway to Heaven and I was like 'Oh my God' and it sounded so awesome to me and I said 'I'm going to play that song one day' and so then I rolled up to the guitar store up there and called my mom. I said 'I have to get a guitar' and she said 'Okay well, if it keeps you out of trouble, I'll get you a guitar' so I got it and just ate it up, all day long, everyday."

Q: What's on your daily listen?

A: "My music is all over the place, like one day I'll be listening to EDM music and next thing you know I'll have metalcore like some hard bands. Then I'll go back to the roots of what I used to listen to, grew up on, Bon Jovi, Skid Row, Motley Crue, my dad used to play all that stuff. I listen to rap too, I listen to so much music."

# Eating disorders affect people from all walks of life

GRACE BABB

Senior Writer

seniorwriter@occc.edu

## I hate my body.

A harsh thought, but a common one on the minds of young women, according to a survey by The Women's Channel at AOL. The survey showed that out of 45,000 women, over 60 percent claimed that they hated the way they looked.

Amanda Wheelock, a 19-year-old college freshman, is no stranger to negative thoughts about body image.

Wheelock attended Norman High School. She's known there as an outspoken public speaker, skilled debater, and proud feminist. She promotes self-acceptance and love, but still has struggles with disordered eating habits during stressful times.

"When I'm in a very bad place, I don't care that what I'm doing is harmful," Wheelock said. "I have days that I am genuinely convinced that I've gained weight, even if I loved my body the day before."

Wheelock has had problems with negative body image for at least six years. She remembers first developing an unhealthy mindset.

"It started in middle school, right around when my body and my worldview of what a body should be was being shaped," Wheelock said.

A survey conducted for the International Journal of Eating Disorders showed that 40 to 60 percent of girls aged 6 to twelve are concerned about "becoming too fat."

Women are often convinced into believing that they can achieve the "model thin" look. What they aren't being told is: they can't.

Image retouching and manipulation are additional factors that contribute to the gap between what is attainable and what is perceived to be attainable. Even when all of this is taken into consideration, the fact that eating disorders are extremely prevalent among models is something passed off as "part of the industry".

A survey conducted by the Model Alliance, an organization dedicated to giving voices to the faces of fashion, found that out of the 85 models interviewed, sixty five percent had been asked to lose weight by an agency. The survey also found that half of the 85 had participated in fasts, cleanses, or otherwise restrictive diets to do so.

Due to the drastic measures that models are heavily encouraged to take in order to lose weight, the standards for the female body as represented in the media have become warped and unrealistic. These standards have a lasting effect on women and their perceptions of their bodies, resulting in the average woman being unaware that her body is "normal."

Anne Becker, an associate professor of anthropology and psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, explored the media's impact on young women by interviewing Fijian girls just three years after television had been introduced to the island in 1998. Becker's research showed that eating disorders and negative

thoughts on personal body image were alive and well on an island that had not previously known anorexia nervosa or bulimia just five years before the introduction of television. The young girls interviewed saw thin women in commercials and soap operas, then looked at their own bodies with disdain.

Often, girls are socialized to think that with enough hard work or effort, they can transform their bodies. Becker says this leads to disappointment and self loathing when the disordered eating habits fail to "work."

Nichole Wood, a psychologist at the Laureate Eating Disorders Program in Tulsa, Oklahoma, spoke on the impact of media on women.

"There are only so many times you can be hit with the message that your

body isn't right – whether you see it on TV, hear it from your mom or just feel it in the ether – before you internalize it and start beating yourself up for not being as perfect

as you should be," she said.

A 2008 survey by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that 75 percent of American women have had unhealthy or disordered thoughts, feelings, or behaviors in relation to food or their bodies.

Cynthia R. Bulik, director of the UNC Eating Disorders Program and a Professor of Eating Disorders in the UNC School of Medicine's department of psychiatry, played a major role in the analysis of the data.

"Our survey found that these behaviors cut across racial and ethnic lines and are not limited to any one group," Bulik said. "Women who identified their ethnic backgrounds as Hispanic or Latina, white, black or African American and Asian were all represented among the women who reported unhealthy eating behaviors."

The data shows that chances are, if you are a woman reading this article, you have likely had disordered eating habits and/or negative thoughts regarding your body. Men aren't excluded from the body image problem, though.

The National Eating Disorder Association estimates that 10 million men will suffer from a clinically significant eating disorder in their lifetime. The standard for the male body in American media is tall, lean and muscular, which is largely unattainable for most men.

These images lead to male body dissatisfaction, which can spur eating disorders and excessive work out routines. An AOL body image survey found that among college-aged men, nearly 70 percent believe they do not have enough muscle.

In recent years, male bodybuilders have become prone to muscle dysmorphia which causes individuals affected to become obsessed with being adequately muscular. Spending hours on end working out, spending money on protein shake mixes, and supplements, and having abnormal eating patterns are parts of the disorder that many do not recognize as unhealthy.

According to the National Association of Anorexia

Nervosa and Associated Disorders, men are less likely to seek treatment for eating disorders because of the perception that they are women's diseases.

The National Eating Disorders Collaboration group found that eating disorders are increasing in both younger and older age groups, as well as amongst boys and men.

This means that both men and women of every age, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background are being affected by the societal "body norms" portrayed by the media. Because many men and women do not even realize they have disordered eating habits, education and awareness are vital aspects when it comes to reducing the prevalence.

Wheelock has been working towards a positive self image to combat the pressures of looking a certain way, and has recently come up with a few solutions of her own to quell inner criticisms that may help someone who is also struggling with disordered eating.

One of the ways she comes to terms with natural body weight fluctuation is thinking about animals and how they also experience fluctuations in weight.

"For lots of animals, fluctuations in body weight is expected. I think about how humans are also animals, and how fluctuations in body weight often are completely natural and healthy," Wheelock said.

Losing or gaining weight in summer months, when you are sick, stressed, or on your period are all natural phenomena.

Wheelock found that when she focused on those facts, she was able to realize that the normal changes her body went through were not flaws.

"When I started to look at my body as a natural vessel, just like any other animal's body, trying to keep me healthy, I became more content with the changes and fluctuations occurring," Wheelock said.

In addition to focusing on positive aspects of her body's processes, she decided to filter the media she was being exposed to.

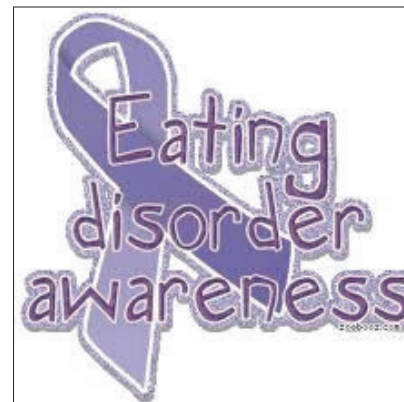
"Seeing very thin models and celebrities was not helping," she said. "Being stressed out and then seeing a constant flow of images of thin body types helps put me back into a state of disordered eating."

In order to have a more positive intake of media, she followed a number of plus sized models on their personal social media accounts.

"When I see them, I'm reminded that beauty has nothing to do with weight. Their weight isn't a flaw," Wheelock said.

For those seeking help, resources exist. Eating-disorderhope.com can help you find resources and clinics near you. If you are seeking understanding, the NEDA has a toll free, confidential hotline that provides support from volunteers, that can be reached at 1-800-931-2237.

To comment on this analysis, please email Grace Babb at [seniorwriter@occc.edu](mailto:seniorwriter@occc.edu) or leave a comment at [Facebook.com/OCCCPioneer](https://www.facebook.com/OCCCPioneer).



## An Analysis



# Vote: Stats show Hispanic population not voting

Continued from Page 1

\$20, now he can print his literature.”

Oklahoma City attorney Lambert D. Dunn Jr. said Oklahoma City’s Hispanic community lacks a group of unified leaders who will educate the community on the political process. Dunn’s clientele is about 90 percent Hispanic.

“If one of those elections comes out the right way, policies will start to change,” Dunn said. “There is no reason that south side Oklahoma City does not have a Hispanic representative if they wanted one.”

The impact the Hispanic community can have on local politics was seen in 2014 when Michael Brooks-Jimenez, a Democrat, ran for Senate District 44 against incumbent Republican Ralph Shortey.

“He came close to winning, if more Hispanic voters would’ve turned out, he could have won. He was only a few hundred votes short,” Dunn said.

Both Dunn and Delgado believe that more Hispanics would vote if there were an organization that helped educate members of the community about the voting process. Delgado said he first began getting involved in state politics through his job.

He said he was brought to the United States when he was three years old. Later he became a resident

and is now a citizen active in the political process. After working on construction sites, Delgado became a field rep for the Laborers’ Union Local 107.

“I think we are doing it, slowly, especially with the younger generation in high school and college students. They’re the ones getting involved,” Delgado said.

Currently, he is coordinating union workers to help campaign for two candidates, Mickey Dollens, a Democrat, who is running for State Representative for District 93 and Cindy Munson, a Democrat seeking re-election for House District 85.

“Recently, I helped a few young Latinos register and the change isn’t going to happen over night. But if we slowly help facilitate and educate the young generation, we’ll eventually get to where we want to be,” Delgado said.

Delgado is also a board member for LULAC, a national Hispanic organization. He said he hopes to create a group by fundraising and structuring it so that the group can collect data to use to reach Hispanic voters during election years.

Another fast growing voter group is Hispanic millennials, said Sharon Vaughan, Oklahoma City Community College political science professor.

Of the 27.3 million Hispanic eligible voters for the 2016 presidential election, the Pew Research Center shows that 44 percent are Hispanic millennials.

Vaughan said there are three battleground states for the 2016 presidential elections: Florida, Colorado and Nevada. She said the impact that U.S. citizens of Puerto Rican descent can have in Florida if they show up to the voting booth.

“Because of the financial crisis and bankruptcy happening in Puerto Rico, 130,000 people have left the island and migrated to Florida,” Vaughn said. “And we forget that these people are born U.S. citizens. They have so much power if they use it.”

Socioeconomics plays a big role in voter turnout, Vaughan said. “Two of the best predictors is education level and income. The higher the education level and income, the most likely a person votes.”

But the 2016 elections are no ordinary elections.

“If the discourse we’ve witnessed in the past few months hasn’t motivated any millennial, I don’t know what will motivate them to vote.”

The big question that cannot be answered until after the 2016 elections is, will Hispanics turn out to the polls?



## What is the real impact of presidential debates?

SOPHIA BABB

Editor

editor@occc.edu

There have been two major presidential debates in the past 30 days, both sparking controversy and conversation across the United States. Eighty million viewers, more than any other televised debate in history, tuned into the first debate to learn the candidates’ proposed policies and differences.

Considering 80 million people watched the debates, was the performance of Trump or Clinton enough to change voters’ minds? Do the debates affect voter decisions?

Oklahoma City Community College Political science professor Sharon Vaughan says, “not much.”

“Political science research tells us that debates usually just reinforce the partisan preferences that are already there, so normally they don’t really change that many people’s minds,” Vaughan said. “Research says they’re not much of a factor, they just reinforce what people already thought they knew.”

A 2003 study by William Benoit outlined the effects of televised debates on viewers. The study concluded that “debates can alter perceptions of the candidate’s personality, but they do not exert a significant effect on perceptions of the candidate’s competence (leadership ability).”

Data from the study also showed that general cam-

paign debates increase viewer knowledge of political issues, and can marginally affect vote preference.

Experts believe many viewers have come to their voting decision by the time of the debates, creating the phenomenon of better-informed viewers with unchanged minds. Political polls and surveys reflect this, with little historical variance in the reception of candidates before and after debates.

One factor that helps shape the perceptions of debates, possibly even more than the debates themselves, is a mighty one: Social media.

A record-breaking 17 million tweets were sent out on the evening of the second presidential debate, highlighting the relationship between social media and debate reception. Post-debate discourse in the news media and on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter influence the ideas of “who won.”



Sharon Vaughan



Polls hosted by conservative outlets such as Fox News claim Trump as winner of both debates, while scientifically conducted surveys, such as the CNN/ORC polls, indicate that Clinton was victorious.

A study by Kim Fridkin and other professors from the Arizona State University analyzed the influence of the media regarding who won a debate. Fridkin had several sets of voters watch the debates with and without commentary from cable news channels, and then asked the viewers who thought had “won.” The results showed the commentary included after the debates greatly shaped the decisions of viewers determining who won or lost.

Although the media can influence the general

population’s analysis of the debates, voter decisions generally remain unaffected. The debates can provide helpful information to voters, but persuasion is not a major occurrence. A July CBS poll found more than a third of Republicans were unhappy with Trump as their candidate, and a quarter of Democrats were disappointed with Clinton. Though the debates may sway undecided voters, there is a larger theme of voters remaining uninspired by their choices.

Public Relations major Ashtin Schones was unmotivated by the debates. “I don’t know if I want to vote or not,” Schones said. “I know who I wouldn’t vote for, but I don’t know who I want to vote for.”

When asked who won the debate, Schones said “nobody.”

“I don’t think the debates really change people’s minds, usually you’re going to just go one way or go the other,” she said. “If you were undecided, it might help you choose one or the other, but it’s not going to help anyone switch sides.”

Business major Teagan Hawkins had a similar reaction. “For me, the debates haven’t affected my decisions.”

Hawkins was raised Republican. He said he has matured and has explored liberal thought. “I really am torn, and to be honest I was originally leaning towards Trump, but with everything that came out about Trump, I don’t know,” he said. “I’m still undecided, because we have someone who doesn’t respect women, and then someone who I believe broke the law. When it comes down to it, I’m picking the better of two evils. I hate the media, and the debates haven’t really helped at all.”



# Intramural sports update

**TRAVIS FORSYTH**  
Sports Writer  
sportswriter@occc.edu

Oklahoma City Community College's intramural flag football season readies to play its final down on Wednesday, Oct. 12.

Sports and Recreational Specialist Matthew Wright said he feels the season has gone well so far.

"We've played a game every Wednesday and had between 12 and 14 players every week so football went well," he said.

The intramural sports season will resume in the first week of November after Wright was forced to cancel the upcoming Ultimate Frisbee season due to the lack of sign ups.

"There's only one person signed up right now and I'm thinking the season isn't going to happen," Wright said.

Ultimate Frisbee was intended to be played T 4p.m. to 7p.m. on Monday nights from Oct. 17 through Nov. 7.

Wright said he would reschedule the Dodgeball Tournament slated for Oct. 19.

"Dodgeball is supposed to be next Wednesday however, that may get pushed

back a week or two and see if we can get more enrollment for that too - we only have 5 signed up right now," he said. "Then after that, basketball, volleyball, and indoor soccer will be starting in the first week of November."

Open Run Basketball will begin Nov. 2.

A new tournament will be played every Wednesday night from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. for the rest of the semester.

Volleyball is scheduled for Thursday nights beginning Nov. 3. Indoor Soccer is set for Friday afternoons starting Nov. 4. Both sports will be played on one of the basketball courts located in the gym said Wright.

A brand new date and time for the dodgeball tournament will be announced soon.

Interested students are asked to fill out a sign up sheet in the gym or at the Rec and Fit office located in the Wellness Center. Participants may register as a team or as an individual or free agent and will be assigned to a team said Wright.

Students will also need their student ID to participate.

For information, contact Matthew Wright at matthew.j.wright@occc.edu

## OCCC plans for quakes, other emergencies

**NICK SARDIS**  
News Writing Student

Earthquakes have become a problem for Oklahoma in the past few years as evidenced by the Sept. 3 earthquake. The preliminary report measured the quake at a 5.6 magnitude in Pawnee, Oklahoma.

On Sept. 7, it was upgraded to a 5.8 magnitude, and was officially acknowledged as the largest reported earthquake in state history.

Many at OCCC are unaware of how to properly respond to an earthquake.

Public relations major, Blake Sutton, was at his home when the earthquake occurred: "I literally ran outside in my underwear because I thought the building was gonna fall on me."

Erin Logan, OCCC's Emergency Planning and Risk Management Director, said in an e-mail: "we do not have any earthquake drills scheduled for this academic year. We do, however, address emergency procedures regarding earthquakes in our Campus Emergency Response Plan."

The Oklahoma Department of

Emergency Management (OEM) encourages people to "drop, cover, and hold on" during an earthquake. "DROP to the floor; take COVER under a sturdy table or piece of furniture. If there isn't a table or desk near you, seek cover against an interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms. HOLD ON until the shaking stops."

Many people wonder what is causing the sudden rise of earthquakes in the state. The Earthquakes in Oklahoma website explains "the majority of recent earthquakes in central and north-central Oklahoma are very likely triggered by the injection of produced water in disposal wells."

Logan is not aware of any damage to the infrastructure of buildings on campus and said "all college buildings met the requirements of the applicable International Building Code (IBC) when constructed."

## ON CAMPUS

### Students plan for break

**Daniel Tran**  
Computer Science  
Major

"Working out by means of intensive disc golfing."



**Cornelia Vann**  
Sociology Major

"I will be resting and getting ready for the second half of the semester."



**Matthew Wedel**  
Computer Science  
Major

"I will be attending a leadership conference with TRIO."



**Kimmy Tran**  
Biology Major

"I'm going to binge watch several seasons of 'Criminal Minds' on Netflix."



Photos by  
Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer



CLASSIFIEDS

**PIONEER HIRING**  
**FOR SPRING SEMESTER**  
We will soon be conducting interviews for **writers and webmasters** to apply go to <https://www.occcjobs.com/> all required documents, listed during application process, must be submitted with application Writers must have taken and passed News Writing Webmasters must be familiar with Wordpress

**CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS**

**Fall Break**  
Thursday Oct. 20 through Sunday Oct. 23, there will be no classes at OCCC. The campus is to remain open but the bookstore will be closed Friday for inventory

**Mass Casualty Simulation**  
Health Professions will host an educational simulation of a mass casualty event at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 26 and will be looking for volunteers to serve as actors during the simulation. More details will follow soon in the Pioneer.

**Christians on Campus Bible Study**  
Bible studies take place Noon to 12:45 p.m. Mondays and 12:30 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. Tuesdays in room 1C5. For details, email [christiansoncampus.occc@gmail.com](mailto:christiansoncampus.occc@gmail.com) or text/call 210-685-8718.

**Native Amercian Student Meetings**  
The Native American Student Association hosts meetings 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. every Tuesday in room 1X5.

**WEEKLY CROSSWORD**

**Across**

1. Health org. based in Atlanta  
4. Bikini, for one  
9. Winter-to-spring transition  
13. Gain, as benefits  
15. He was found dead with Paris  
16. Dance with a story  
17. Magazine with "Decor" and "Girl" spin-offs  
18. Butler of "Grace Under Fire"  
19. Wide-screen format?  
20. Well-endowed person who may sport a "third leg"  
23. Reindeer feature  
24. Start of a "Can you believe it?" story  
28. Little giggle  
29. Rock's \_\_\_\_ Fighters  
31. Sesame and sunflower  
32. Magic \_\_\_\_ (book series of stereograms)  
33. 1,440 minutes  
34. Playground favorite  
35. Someone likely to use their third eye  
39. Wizards' garments  
41. Noted South African sportsman  
42. Police radio report, for short  
45. Drink whose 1990 cans appeared to spell "SEX" when stacked  
46. Oceanic affirmative  
47. "\_\_\_\_ Grows in Brooklyn"  
49. Small restaurants  
51. Colleague of Kennedy, Scalia, and Breyer  
52. "Boogie Nights" actor who supposedly has a third nipple  
55. El Salvador?  
58. Raccoon-like creature  
59. Cheese in a red rind  
60. Fiery gem  
61. WWII hero Murphy  
62. Capital city of Europe  
63. Give over  
64. Parts of a process  
65. Top rating

**Down**

1. Perform cinerary duties  
2. Kim of "NYPD Blue"  
3. Bust a party, in a way  
4. Woody cover  
5. Pressure unit  
6. Sign of the future  
7. "This place sucks"  
8. Lenya of "The Threepenny Opera"  
9. Last Supper count  
10. Air conditioner noise  
11. "\_\_\_\_ peanut butter and jelly sandwiches!" (The Amazing Mumford line on "Sesame Street")  
12. Too much in your ear, and you can't hear  
14. Jordan of "MADtv"  
21. Number one concern?  
22. In a daze  
25. Phrase that may get you both sent to your rooms  
26. Evil grandmother on "Malcolm in the Middle"  
27. Wind dir.  
29. Way out of reach  
30. Exclamation of lament  
33. Put down  
34. Part of DOS  
36. Toughest part of a marathon, maybe  
37. First name in film directors  
38. Bullfighting yell  
39. Annenberg/\_\_\_\_ (non-profit behind educational programming)  
40. 16-across prop  
43. Group of equal status  
44. "The Seventh Seal" director  
46. Call for a date  
47. Steve Case started it  
48. Potato classification  
50. Killer whales  
51. Turns (away from)  
53. Walk through water  
54. "Let me give you \_\_\_\_"  
55. Dwarf with glasses  
56. Dr. Zaius, for one  
57. Dundee dude

**HELP KIDS BE KIDS**  
**Partner with TRIO & Donate to:**  
**The Children's Hospital**  
**Their Wish List:**

- Coloring books
- Baby toys
- Markers
- Paint/paint brushes
- Educational books
- Nail polish/beauty products
- Unisex toys
- Crossword books
- Sports balls
- Action figures
- Legos

Donation drop box available in the TRIO office MB1T7 (next to the Bursar)

**DEADLINE: Nov. 7**

**TRIO**

For more information contact Matt Wedel, TRIO Apprentice at [matthew.s.wedel@my.occc.edu](mailto:matthew.s.wedel@my.occc.edu)

**CLASSIFIED BUSINESS AD:**  
\$8 per 7 lines.  
Find out how to advertise affordably.  
405-682-1611, ext. 7674.

**Send your news to the Pioneer**  
email us at [editor@occc.edu](mailto:editor@occc.edu) or visit the Pioneer Office

# Student becomes ambassador to black youth

GRACE BABB

Senior Writer

seniorwriter@occc.edu

Simone Mathenia, a Nursing major at Oklahoma City Community College, began competing in pageants in 2011. She was nineteen at the time, and claimed she knew nothing more about pageants than what the movie “Miss Congeniality” could tell her.

Now, she has an air of confidence, and talks about herself and her history with an ease that makes it apparent she’s done it before.

While some reflect on their pageant participation as something that sparked their personal confidence and individuality, Mathenia believes that competing strengthened what she already had.

“I wouldn’t say that it had given me a voice, because I’ve had it, but it gave me that motivation to use it for something good,” Mathenia said. “You have to know who you are to know where you’re going.”

Both her active involvement with the college and her pageantry showcased her ability to lead.

Mathenia first began as the activity coordinator of OCCC’s Black Student Association, but soon became the president.

In addition to the Black Student Association, Mathenia was active in the Leadership Council, serving as the co-chair, and then the chair. Mathenia recently passed her title on this past semester.

Rising in the ranks isn’t something new to Mathenia.

When Mathenia won Miss Black Oklahoma County in 2014, it enabled her to compete for the state title. There, Mathenia competed against young women from various colleges and regions throughout the state.

Mathenia returned home triumphantly, after earning the crown and title of Miss Black Oklahoma 2014.

Until 1975, the Miss America Pageant’s seventh contest rule stated that “contestants must be of good health and of the white race.”

Clara Luper, a leader in the American Civil Rights Movement, decided that she wasn’t going to wait around for the rules to change.

Founded in 1968, the Miss Black Oklahoma Scholarship Pageant has showcased countless young women that exemplify the intelligence and beauty of the African American youth of Oklahoma.

Mathenia recognizes the importance of the pageant for the African American community.

“There was a time when we couldn’t compete at all,” Mathenia said.

For over four decades now, the Miss Black Oklahoma Pageant has celebrated African American culture, and provided an avenue towards further success for the young women that participate.

In addition to founding one of the first African-American pageants, Luper was a recognized pioneer of civil rights in Oklahoma, participating in famous



Simone Mathenia. *Pioneer Archives*

organized sit-ins and marches throughout the 1960s.

“She made Oklahoma and the United States of America a better place to live and was a shining example of the distinctly American idea that while we might hail from many cultures, we are one people,” Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett said in a statement following her death in 2011.

“I want to be that light for someone else. That’s what pageantry gave me” - Simone Mathenia

In an interview with a CNN affiliate, Luper’s son, Calvin, reflected on his mother’s legacy after her death.

“Now we have to step up to the plate and accept the responsibility and do what Mom wanted us to do, and that would be to carry on her legacy of honesty and do anything else that would make our city and state a great place,” Calvin said.

Calvin’s two sisters now carry on that mission by directing the pageant with Luper’s ideals in mind.

“The Miss Black pageant system gives young girls a platform to show their talent, their beauty, and that they have a voice,” Mathenia said.

Mathenia has participated in both the Miss Black and Miss America system. Participants are not allowed to compete after the age of 24, so Mathenia is continuing pageantry through the Miss Black US Ambassador system.

“The system I’m in now is Miss Black US Ambassador. Which is not with the same system, but it has the same model. The same model to show girls: I look like you. You can do whatever you put your mind to. This is your platform. Something firm to stand on,”

Mathenia said.

Mathenia said she gets the most joy from inspiring young girls to follow in her footsteps and find their own voice.

“I want to be that light for someone else. That’s what pageantry gave me,” Mathenia said.

The Dove Self-Esteem Fund recently conducted a national study called “Real Girls, Real Pressure: A National Report on the State of Self-Esteem”. The report analyzed online data taken from 1,029 girls between the ages of 8 and 17 and explored self esteem issues for young African Americans.

According to the study, 68 percent of teenage African American girls feel they do not measure up in some way regarding their looks, performance in school and relationships with family and friends.

Being bombarded with doctored images of tall, thin white women is damaging to all women, but especially young African American girls who have little to no representation in the media.

Mathenia recalled being one of five in the minority in a classroom as a young girl.

“Being on the volleyball team, there were girls who voiced that they didn’t like me being on varsity because I was a darker girl,” Mathenia said.

“Me not being accepted because I was a darker girl meant me growing up with low self-esteem,” Mathenia said. “I felt like I wasn’t pretty enough, and that I was just too dark.”

When she started pageantry, her confidence was transformed.

“I will never forget after one of my first pageants, the judge came to me and said, ‘You look like a Nubian queen. Keep going.’ That turned on a light,” Mathenia said.

Being known as Miss Black Oklahoma US Ambassador allows Mathenia to talk to young girls in her crown and sash, and serve

as a leading role model.

“I recently visited with a group of young girls at a teahouse. Afterwards, one of the grandmothers came and thanked me,” Mathenia said.

The grandmother expressed her gratitude, and explained that her granddaughter had been going through low self-esteem issues, but wouldn’t discuss it with her.

“It’s normal for kids to not talk about what they’re going through, because they think no one understands,” Mathenia said. “If they can talk to someone who went through what they went through, that can help.”

Mathenia believes that pageantry is a positive influence on self confidence, but stands by her belief that knowing and loving who you are in the first place is worth more than anything else.

“If you’re confident and have self worth, then there’s your crown. You don’t have to have a visible crown to say, hey, I’m a queen.”