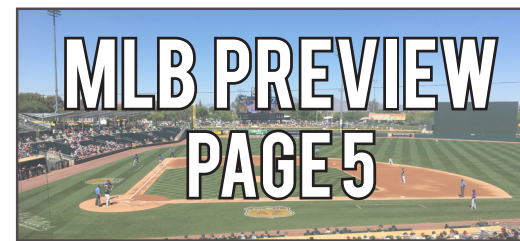


# PIONEER



## Legislature disagrees on funding for education

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Oklahoma faces several hurdles to fixing its education and funding crisis.

While legislators debate the appropriate source of funding for its three education systems, two-year campuses including Oklahoma City Community College watch their budgets shrink.

Former State Representative Joe Dorman said he believes this is partly due to a rise of anti-intellectualism – not only in classrooms, but in the Oklahoma legislature.

“There is an overall mentality nationwide of less value in a quality education,” he said.

Dorman said some members of the Oklahoma legislature question the need for high levels of education and fact-based arguments.

“Many people want to believe what they read on social media even when there is no basis of fact behind it. Rather, decisions are based on emotion,” he said.

This perception concerns Dorman because it has led to problems with funding education at all levels, he said.

Political Science professor Dr. Sharon Vaughan agreed. She said there is a suspicion for academics and that feeling has bled over into the state legislature.

“Higher education is under attack at the Capital. They think that in higher education we have too much money, we don’t spend the money wisely, and they think that professors are overpaid and underworked. They have this idea that we are just at home reading a book and smoking a pipe. That’s just not how it is here,” Vaughan said.

House majority leader Jon Echols, R-Oklahoma City, acknowledged a communication problem between higher education officials and some state lawmakers.

“There is a feeling that higher education needs to make sure they are reaching out to their House and Senate members so that they fully understand what is happening on their campuses,” he said.

Echols said those in higher education could do a better job at showing that it is the economic driver for this state’s future. He stressed the importance of a continued dialogue between both groups. He pointed to events like Higher Education Day at the state Capitol and speaking with constituents as ways to open those lines of communication.

“I think almost every issue at the end of the day can be solved through communication,” he said.

“They think that in higher education we have too much money.” - Sharon Vaughan

Dorman said that when he was a college student in 1994, roughly a third of a student’s education was paid for by the state. Now assistance is substantially lower. In particular, specialized programs like nursing have seen state support drop even lower.

“This is the wrong direction. We should be investing in opportunities,” he said.

A 2015 report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities indicates

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The Oklahoma City Memorial. Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer

## Oklahoma City hosts a day of remembrance

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On a clear and sunny Oklahoma morning 22 years ago, a picturesque scene was shattered when a massive truck bomb exploded on the street outside of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building.

That day, Oklahoma saw the darkest humanity has to offer. This heinous act, perpetrated by Timothy McVeigh claimed the lives of 168 men and women, including 19 children. It injured more than 680 others. The blast destroyed or damaged 324 buildings in the downtown Oklahoma City area.

The events of April 19, 1995 went down as the largest act of domestic terrorism in American history.

But in response, the world bore witness to what has been coined the Oklahoma standard. Within moments, citizens

See OKLAHOMA STANDARD on page 7



## EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Struggling to interpret the American dream

**What does the “American Dream” mean to you?**

James Truslow Adams, a historian, first used the phrase in 1931. He wrote, “The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.”

Though Adams was the first to coin the term, we can trace the ideal back to the Declaration of Independence. When our forefathers secured the pursuit of happiness as a right rather than an indulgence, it was a revolutionary idea that portrayed America as a land of positive opportunity.

The abundance of opportunity was seen as a promise to immigrants, the poor, and the persecuted. The

American Dream was meant to be in everyone’s reach of achievement. It was the promise that real hard work would equal real success. It was a promise not made to the aristocrats, but to the American people.

But for America’s poorest of the poor, the American Dream remains just what it sounds like; a fleeting dream, and nothing more.

**The American Dream and Upward Mobility**

A hallmark of the American Dream is that of equal opportunity. This opportunity is defined as “upward mobility,” or the ability an individual has to move from one economic class to another.

Americans often believe that if you work hard enough, you will become richer. There is the notion that if you have honest determination and a robust work ethic, you will not be destitute in America. These beliefs have no real veracity to them when speaking of our most vulnerable – those born into poverty.

A Pew Charitable Trust analysis on mobility showed that 43 percent of Americans raised at the bottom of the income ladder remain stuck there as adults. For those who do make it out of the very bottom of poverty, 70 percent of them will still never reach the middle class.

The study focused on the differences between those who move up from the very bottom and those who don’t. Their research showed:

College graduates were over five times more likely to leave the bottom rung than non-college graduates.

Dual-earner families were over three times more likely to leave the bottom rung than single-earner families.

Whites were two times more likely to leave the bottom rung than blacks.

The study concluded that economically stable families are the most likely candidates to move up the income ladder, leaving the true American Dream in reach for some.

The study gloomily points to the fact that “working hard to succeed” means something much different for a black single mother with no college education compared to a married white man who has a savings account and a degree.

**It’s expensive to be poor**

James Baldwin once wrote, “Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor.” Life doesn’t just stop for the poor. Illnesses happen, accidents and tragedies strike, depression hits, and deaths, emergencies, car wrecks and repairs all come down on the poor just as much as they do the middle and upper class. The difference is that the weight of these common inconveniences is often felt much more heavily by the poor.

NPR’s Brooke Gladstone described the “expense of being poor” on an episode of *On the Media*. “If you’re poor, you pay more for public transit because you can’t afford a monthly pass or you rely on old cars that break down and cost more to fix, while paying gas prices that have outrun your wages. You pay more for car insurance because of where you live. You pay more for rent than your place is worth.”

“If you’re poor, you’re unlikely to eat healthy meals because healthy food costs

an average of \$45 more a month, tough on a minimum wage. You can’t buy any food cheaply because it costs more in poor neighborhoods and, without spare cash, you can’t even save by buying in bulk,” she said. “You’re less likely to have a bank account because of soaring fees and penalties, you cash checks at places that take a cut. You also pay a higher percentage of your income in state and local taxes than the rest of us do, and so on. It’s death by a thousand cuts and no way to staunch the bleeding.”

**Dehumanization of the poor**

There never fails to be a surplus of questions asked of those in poverty, expected to be answered and then used to blame the poor for being poor.

These questions include, “Why aren’t they working? Why don’t they work harder? Why did they have sex if they didn’t want a baby? Why did they keep the baby if they knew they couldn’t afford a child? Why don’t they go to college? Why did they drop out?”

The poor constantly have to justify themselves against the normal decisions that anyone, not just someone in poverty, would have to face.

Taking time off to care for a family member, arrange a funeral, take care of a newborn or recover from a sickness becomes something much more devastating for the poor than for those who are financially secure. There is no room to make mistakes, to grieve, to recover. There is a low wage to earn and tough hours to show up for.

A slip-up for someone in poverty quickly becomes grounds for blame in the eyes of a well-off individual who sees the poor person as lazy. These questions and expectations lead to the dehumanization of the poor, or the belief that we wouldn’t react similarly if we’re in the exact same situation.

The working poor have worked harder than you may ever have to.

“Service sector employers often engage in practices that middle class professionals would never accept,” author Kathryn Edin wrote in her book, “\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America.”

“The sectors of the economy populated by low wage workers now dwarf those that the country once relied on to provide jobs in the working-class trades that paid a respectable wage. Low-wage employment is projected to grow, not shrink.”

“They adopt policies that, purposely or not, ensure regular turnover among their low-wage workers, thus cutting the costs that come with a more stable workforce, including guaranteed hours, benefits, raises, promotions and the like,” Edin said. “Whatever can be said about the characteristics of the people who work low-wage jobs, it is also true that the jobs themselves too often set workers up for failure.”

**Recognizing your own luck**

Anastasia Basil, a writer for Think Progress, wrote a piece on growing up in poverty. Basil commented on the good luck of those who are financially secure.

“If you had help paying for college, if someone bought you your first car, if you had health insurance growing up, if your mom never cried over \$17, you were lucky,” Basil wrote. “Take a good long look at your feet. If you were born at the starting line wearing a nice pair of running shoes, that was luck. Sheer luck. The most important thing you can do now is help those who had to start the race a mile behind you, barefoot.”

Call it what you want – luck, chance, a blessing, or privilege; it doesn’t what we label it. It matters what we do with our luck and good fortune. If you are financially secure, you can start by changing your perception of the poor and showing them grace and compassion rather than criticism and judgment. In this way, you can cultivate gratitude for your own blessings and privileges.

The conversation doesn’t end here

Part two of this editorial series on poverty will examine the personal efforts you can take to fight against poverty, and what policies and laws have or haven’t worked in the past.

—SOPHIA BABB  
EDITOR

## NETFLIX REVIEW | A RAW LOOK AT LIFE'S CONSEQUENCES

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



# Succeeding in college as a single mother

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When the clock strikes 7 a.m., Rachael and her six year old daughter Sophia awake to embrace the world and all its challenges.

Brushing teeth, getting dressed, and making sure everyone is where they're supposed to be is the daily routine for Rachael.

As she sits on the bus heading to the Lloyd Noble Center at Oklahoma University to go to work, her mind often drifts to the life she once lived and all the obstacles she's overcome.

If Rachel is not at work, she is on her break, which means she is in class working on her education. This is a regular occurrence Monday through Friday from 8 a.m to 4 p.m.

In 2009 she was a freshman at Oklahoma City Community College with high ambitions.

"I came from a low-income home with seven kids and two parents who each have two jobs to support the family," Colbart said. "It was difficult for my family to support me financially, but they've always been there to support me right from the beginning."

Rachael worked with different federal aids to help finance her education. This would all change in 2010.

"I was taking a few hours at OCCC and ended up getting pregnant around 2010. I left the school for about two years and raised my daughter as a single mom. By that time, I had lost my waitressing job and was doing anything that I could to make sure that my baby was able to eat and be taken care of."

According to a report from NewsOK in 2012, almost 122,700 single mothers are raising one or more children in the state of Oklahoma.

While she worked with OKDHS, Rachael reminded them that she was still interested in education and bettering herself.

That was the first time she heard about the Career Transitions program at OCCC. Lisa Brown is the director of the program that works in conglomeration with OKDHS to help people in need get back to college and into the workforce.

"What we always say is that we care about the total student because we understand when you come that you have things going on in your life, and you have to focus on college with the limited income that you have," Brown said. "So when Rachael came, she had a lot of specific things going on in her life. We brought her in, sat her down with a box of tissues, and we just tried to problem-solve her issues and figure out how to resolve the ones that are at hand."

"I would cry a lot," Rachel said, "but that was the thing about Career Transitions; they were the people who said it was going to be okay. It made me believe right then that I'm not alone and that's what helped."

Since the program works with OKDHS, it stays open year-round.

In 2013, Rachael came back to OCCC with Career Transitions helping her along the way. Through many



Rachel Colbart with daughter. *Photos provided*

hours and hard work, Colbart was able to maintain her schoolwork as well as be an active mother to her daughter.

"Some people are privileged and blessed enough to have parents who are able to buy them their car, pay for their apartment, and that's great for them," Colbart said. "That being said, don't take advantage of that. There's plenty of people like me who would kill for opportunities like that. In fact, the term 'C's get degrees' to this day makes me so upset, especially when I used to work in the Comm lab."

In the Communications Lab that she was able to hone her skills as a writer. Whether it be for different classes or more practical uses, Colbart was able to practice something she knew would inherently be important in the future.

Nicholas McKee, the lab supervisor, has worked in the communications lab for five years, but he worked as a lab assistant while Rachael was working as a tutor.

"Rachael originally was just working at the front desk, until my supervisor at the time saw that she had potential to be a good tutor for the other students to learn from," McKee said. "Her sessions were always really friendly, very helpful, and she built a very good rapport with students with some great advice."

She built lasting relationships with the people she worked with throughout her OCCC career, but her greatest achievement was her recurring 4.0 GPA every semester. Rachael graduated in 2014 with a degree in Diversified Studies.

Not long after that her academic sights focused in on OU. Applying for scholarships and grants, she used her skills she had acquired at OCCC to receive federal grants from OU.

The amount she made per year with scholarships and tuition waivers was between \$14,000 and \$15,000 per year.

"I would love to say that I earned it but it's also luck," Colbart said with a smirk. "I worked hard, yes, but did I deserve it more than the other people who wanted it? No, it just worked out for me in that scenario. It also goes back to learning how to write to help me in my career path."

With her goals in mind and her heart set towards the future, Colbart will be graduating in May of 2016 with a Bachelor's degree in Criminology. As the tides of fortune continue to ebb and flow, Rachael also was accepted into the Masters of Social Work at OU.

The OU MSW program focuses on direct practice work which helps people one-on-one in need of assistance through DHS.

Rachael's plans have extended out to as far as her future will allow her to see. Organizations such as the non-profit organization called Court Appointed Special Advocates, also known as CASA, is something she has been working towards.

By the end of Rachael's work day at 4 p.m., she is on a bus to pick her daughter up from school. The duo could be attending a swim class, a dance class, or church.

When Sophia goes to sleep at 9 p.m., this is what Rachael refers to as "study time." She works until 1 a.m. And then without a second's hesitation, she is off to bed.

Before her mind drifts into the dreams where yesterday, today, and the future collide, she can't help but think about some of the things she wished people would tell college students to help them.

"Never, ever give up. Every closed door is never really closed much like the word 'no' is never really a no. A stop is just a speed bump. Society has a way of telling us no and we accept that. No is not the answer. It never is."





# Rangers look to lead division again in new season

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**T**exas will remain atop the division until someone knocks them off their pedestal. Until then, the Rangers are focused on improving their postseason performance to make a meaningful run toward a World Series. Meanwhile, Houston may not have enough to fulfill "Sports Illustrated's" bold prediction of winning a world series this year, but expect the Astros to go toe to toe with big brother Texas for the division crown and make the tournament in October.

Seattle has a team that looks poised to make the postseason, but do they have enough to compete with Houston and Texas for a playoff berth? If they don't, expect baseball's longest playoff drought to continue.

While the real excitement concerning L.A. baseball typically comes from up the interstate at Dodger's Stadium, the one interesting topic from Angels headquarters is if and when they'll trade American League MVP Mike Trout and as the Athletics continue their rebuild, the only news from Oakland is that they lost their football team.

**Texas Rangers** - There's no doubt that between the two MLB franchises that reside in the Lone Star State, the Rangers are seen as the older brother. However, that doesn't mean they shouldn't be on their toes in 2017. Like it or not, little brother Houston is catching up.

Aside from potentially losing the division to their cross-state rivals, Texas will focus on improving their postseason performance, which has been a huge disappointment, coming off consecutive losses to Toronto in the division round. In 2016, the Rangers were barely competitive in a three-game sweep by the Jays.

The Rangers have reigned as the AL West champs the previous two seasons, and with two aces in their starting rotation, a top flight bullpen, and enough firepower offensively, the Rangers enter 2017 loaded with a combination that

will help them stay atop the division for a third consecutive season.

**Projection: 90-72**

**Houston Astros** - On June 30, 2014, Sports Illustrated made a bold prediction that Houston would build a team that would rise atop the major league to become "Your 2017 World Series Champs."

With Houston averaging 100 losses a season, this prophecy didn't look legit at the time. Fast forward to 2017 and the Astros look poised to make a possible run back to the postseason. However, whether they'll go on a magical run to the fall classic will remain to be seen.

The starting rotation was a big weakness a year ago with the starter's ERA skyrocketing from 3.71 in 2015 to 4.37 in 2016. Starting left-hander Dallas Keuchel was the biggest drop off a year ago, posting a 9-12 record with a 4.55 ERA after putting up a 20-9 record with a 2.48 ERA in 2015.

If the starting rotation can return to their 2015 form, the Astros could be dangerous in 2017. Adding outfielders Josh Reddick and Nori Aoki to one of the league's better offenses will not only give the Astros some extra juice when at the plate but would also strengthen Houston's already solid defense. Fac-

tor in their strong bullpen and you've got a team that could make due on SI's prophecy. **Projection: 88-74**

**Seattle Mariners** - The rebuild has been a long and agonizing process but good news for Seattle fans. The Mariners finally look ready to take the next step and make a push for the postseason.

The team that surprisingly ripped off 86 wins a season ago returns with their eyes set to wipe a 15-year playoff drought - the longest in baseball - that has loomed over the franchise like a dark cloud. To do so, they'll need improvement and constancy from a pitching rotation that was riddled with injuries.

The Mariners will rely on rookie outfielders Ben Gamel, Mitch Haniger, and 1B Dan Vogelbach to play significant roles. The trio made up of Robinson Cano, Nelson Cruz, and Kyle Seager make a solid core that's as good as any in baseball.

The determining factors for Seattle's success in 2017 fall on how the pieces around their core players fare this year. If they don't do enough to move up in the standings, the dark cloud might stick around for at least another year.

**Projections: 80-82**

**Los Angeles Angels** - Once upon

a time L.A. was a favorite to win a championship, but now the Angels are in transition with the future of the team sparking rumors of possibly dealing with two-time American League MVP Mike Trout. Trout, the best player in baseball, is a 25-year-old outfielder in the prime of his Hall of Fame career. If L.A. were to trade him, it would help a franchise whose current roster is drastically thin on talent, thanks to several poor front office decisions that left the Angels with one of the worst farm systems in the majors. It's no doubt that trading Trout has the potential for a wave of fresh talent that could significantly jumpstart a rebuild.

While the Angels could always keep Trout and build a team around him, they don't have the cap nor the development system to build anything spontaneous enough to take them to the promised land. However, the club did make some additions to help them improve; outfielder Cameron Maybin fills a major hole at left field, and shortstop Andrelton

Simmons was everything L.A. had hoped for defensively and also helped improve offensive production, batting .281 a year ago.

Regardless of what the Angels' front office decides to do with their young star, L.A. should be in for a below-average campaign. Expect the phones to ring at the trade deadline to inquire about Trout's services.

**Projections: 73-89**

**Oakland Athletics** - Nowhere near competing, the A's are more focused on spending the 2017 season developing their prospects, while also battling with the city of Oakland to give them a new ballpark now that the Raiders have officially left town. Oakland didn't win a ton of games a year ago but their prospects P Sean Manaea, 3B Ryon Healy, C Bruce Maxwell and 2B Joey Wendle all played exceptionally well in their first year in the big leagues. If the A's can get off to a quick start in 2017 to re-energize their disgruntled fan base and get out of the habit of trading their best players instead of paying top-dollar for them, it will help Oakland move forward to become a better ball club.

**Projection: 67-95**



Texas Rangers mascot 'Captain'. Photo from Alamy Stock Images/Alamy.com



# Pioneer Picks: Record Store Day 2017

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This year is the tenth anniversary of Record Store Day, which takes place Saturday, April 22. Since 2007, the advocacy for independent record stores has bloomed to a holiday celebrated around the world.

The participating locations in the state are: The Beat Goes On/ Cd's & More in Claremore, 3 Dachshunds in Edmond, Guestroom Records in Norman and Oklahoma City, Reggie's Records in Ponca City, CD Warehouse in Shawnee, Blue Moon Discs in Tulsa, Holy Mountain Music & Oddities in Tulsa and Starship Records & Tapes in Tulsa.

Special pressings of new and long lost music are also a staple of Record Store Day. An eclectic collection of music from varied artists and genres will make their way to the selected stores on the list in a limited quantity. The list can be found on the official Record Store Day website, but a few highlights should definitely be on your radar come Saturday.

**"All Together Now" - Andre 3000 (7" Single)**

Andre 3000 has always been loved for his style and performance. His mark as member of Outkast is hard not to forget. This year, his cover of The Beatles "All Together Now" will be something to keep your ears out for.

**"BOWPROMO"/"Cracked Actor" (Live in Los Angeles '74) - David Bowie (Box Set/3 LP)**

The loss of Bowie was something no one expected. His recent full length "Blackstar" was a morbid look at the state of mind of a frail and dying man. To celebrate his beginnings as an artist, the titled "BOWPROMO" box set features a dive into the promotional release of Bowie's early tunes. The story goes that his manager printed these out for Bowie and his mate Dana Gillespie to get a record deal. "Cracked Actor" is a

recorded live set of some of Bowies best. Less of a novelty, but more of a compilation of just good rock. These will probably go quickly, so make sure to find them early.

**"Ain't it Funny" - Danny Brown (10" Picture Disc)**

Danny Brown is an acquired taste. His deep acoustic and bassy production mixed with his bombastic, schizophrenic rap style can really take some getting used to. However, repeated listens to his phenomenal album "Atrocity Exhibition" made me appreciate the character study of the brittle and sometimes disgusting nature of humanity. The track "Ain't it Funny" is an abrasive look into drug abuse and the mental cycle that comes with it. The picture disc looks dope too.

**"First Weapon Drawn" - CZARFACE (LP/Comic)**

Hip-hop was given new blood when people embraced the Wu-Tang Clan. A decade after their debut, MC Inspectah Deck of the group joined 7L and Esoteric to form what is known as CZARFACE. With similar themes to MFDOOM and his Madlib collaboration "MadVillain", the trio sought to bring more of a hero to the hip-hop world. Their use of varied old-school samples and hard-hitting snares will sit well with any fan of the genre. This Record Store Day exclusive is more of a narrative piece, as music is paired with a fully produced comic book to follow along with the beat.

**"Live at The Woodstock Music & Art Fair, August 16, 1969" - Santana (LP)**

Saying that "Santana made his guitar swoon" was something that has always stuck with me. The production and success of his latin ballads and light rock tunes all began here. Woodstock needed a backup gig after a group couldn't make it. Santana grabbed his guitar and his mates and gave a performance that changed their lives. For the first time on vinyl, the entire set of the legendary gig at Woodstock will be available on Record Store Day.

**"The Boy With The Thorn In His Side" - The Smiths (7" Single)**

The Smiths held that melancholic place in the '80s with strong falsetto vocals and a need to be wanted. This jumpy pop-rock tune is still so pleasing to hear. If you have the time to listen to the rest of their discography, do so, but if you end up picking this up on Saturday, I believe it's also a fantastic place to start.

**"Hot Thoughts" - Spoon (12" Single)**

The Texas-based band has recently released a well received full length album with the same name. Serving as a strong first single previewing the album, "Hot Thoughts." This still stands as a fantastic re-introduction to the band's layered, impactful, and catchy sound.

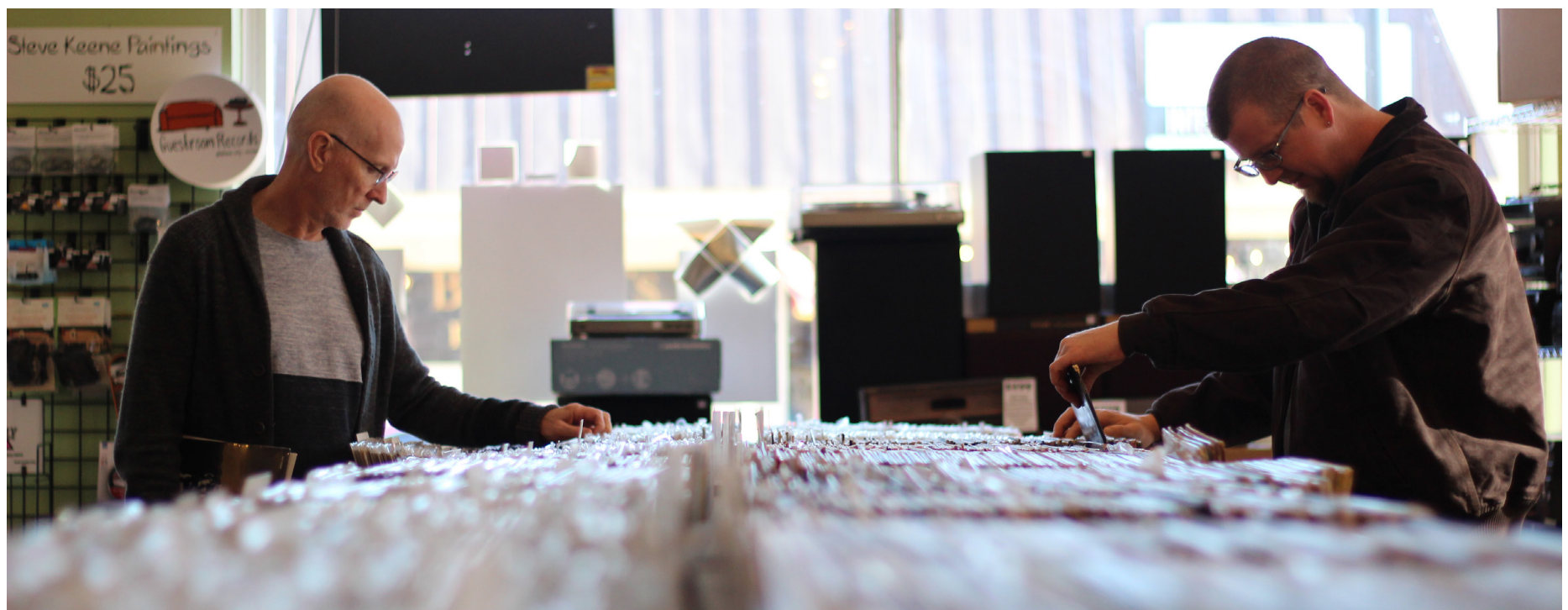
**"Africa" - Toto (12" Picture Disc)**

"Africa" is a special one. The synths cradle the beat so well, as the buildup of guitars and drums allow the crooning vocals to blast into a bridge that sticks with anyone who listens once. This special picture disc pressing of the continent of Africa looks cool as hell, and could be a sweet piece to keep in your collection.

**"Blade Runner Original Soundtrack" - Vangelis (LP Picture Disc)**

With the announcement of "Blade Runner 2049," I found myself listening to the original soundtrack by Vangelis over and over. The fearless fusion of synthetic keys and noir themes blended so immaculately, that it's hard to wonder what direction the new film will take sonically. It's an album full of audio clips of the original 1982 film, mixed in with the beautiful score. From the twenty-fifth anniversary record that is available to listen to now, I can only imagine now clean it will sound on vinyl.

Record Store Day is just around the corner. Make sure and support your local indie record stores come Saturday. Even if this event is once a year, they're not going anywhere.



Customers search the vinyl at Guest Room Records in Oklahoma City. Victor A. Pozadas/Pioneer





Photos by Aaron Cardenas/Pioneer

# Oklahoma standard: an outpouring of compassion

*continued from page 1*

and first responders began pouring in to aid in rescue efforts. Within hours, an overflow of donations, supplies, and money flooded the site.

Paula Sophia Schonauer was an officer for the Oklahoma City Police. When the bomb exploded, she was at home in bed after working the late shift. Schonauer was confused by an unusual rumbling sound, shortly after, she received the call to report for duty.

A veteran of the Gulf War, she said she could only compare the scene in downtown OKC to a war zone. Despite the horrors she saw, she speaks mostly of an overwhelming deluge of assistance that came in,

“There were so many responders we actually had to turn people away. One guy showed up with all these pizza boxes. I asked him if he needed an invoice. He said ‘heck no!’. This is where I think the Oklahoma standard comes from,” Schonauer said.

Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating addressed a crowd at Oklahoma City Community College two weeks before the 22nd anniversary of the bombing.

“Of the hundreds of buildings damaged, not one was looted,” he said, “Just think about that.”

Former Pioneer Lab director Ronna Austin was in her last semester as a journalism student at OCCC when the bombing took place.

“I was walking into the building and I heard what I thought was distant thunder. It was really odd to me because it was really clear outside. There were no clouds in the sky or inclement weather. It was kind of confusing,” she said.

As the TV reports came in, Austin said, students and staff gathered around to watch the story unfold. Initially, reports said there’d been a possible natural gas explosion. It was not until later that it became apparent that a bomb had gone off. She said that’s when the national media

came to Oklahoma.

“That night I got a call from Sue Hinton, who was the newspaper advisor at the time. She said that CNN had called the college and they were looking for journalism students to come and work with them,” Austin said.

She worked nights for CNN for almost a year as they covered the bombing. She said first responders were offered counseling early on. It took time before people began to realize journalists on the ground might have needed the same help.

Among the journalists was Journal Record Managing Editor David Page. He said he was working in the Journal Record office across the street from the Murrah building when the bomb went off.

“I had just gotten up and left my desk to get a cup of coffee. I was walking back across the newsroom when there was this explosion,” Page said, “I walked out to the street and saw all this glass everywhere.”

Page suffered lacerations and blood loss from the impact of flying glass. He survived that day, but others did not.

Oklahoma City Community College student in 1995 Kimberly K. Clark, 39, was among the 168 people who died that day. Clark was a petty officer first class in the U.S. Naval Reserve and legal assistant for the Urban and Housing development office. Her wedding date was weeks away.

A scholarship fund was set up in her honor through the Oklahoma City Community Foundation.

On Wednesday, April 19, 2017, survivors and family members came together to place wreaths on each of the symbolic chairs at the memorial grounds where the Murrah building once stood. Each empty chair represents a life lost in the explosion.

In addition to the placement of wreaths, speakers at the remembrance ceremony included U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, and U.S. Senator James Lankford.



# Demo chief fires executive director

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News Writing Student

State Democrats are angry with chairman Mark Hammons, saying he sabotaged the party by firing the executive director, Sarah Baker a month before the state convention.

“Mark Hammons just made a very bad move regarding our party and its leadership,” Christina Owens, a congressional candidate, wrote in a social media post. Owens said she is baffled as to why Hammons fired Sarah Baker, the Oklahoma Democratic party’s executive director.

Without Baker there to appoint new seats for the upcoming convention, Owens said she is not sure how the party can navigate.

“Who terminates the Executive Director, with no grounds before Convention, during special elections, and with pending VAN access for precinct leaders?” she said.

Owens said she is afraid Hammons’ hasty decision will cause the Democratic party to suffer.

“We are a ship without a captain, as if Democrats in this state aren’t suffering enough,” she said. “This is a devastating decision that shows a complete lack of big picture planning and leadership.”

Hammons said that Sarah Baker’s interest in becoming party chairperson appeared to be a conflict of interest.

“Even if you can be 100 percent straight, and draw a line between when you’re doing party business and when you’re doing campaign work, and I’ll be honest with you, I don’t think you can do that,” he said. “It would appear to be a conflict of interest.”

Hammons said that even if Baker could stay, she would be using party resources and money to benefit herself. He said that if Baker would have come to him and brought his attention to her campaign he still would have asked her to resign due to the appearance of her campaign.

Hammons said he isn’t sure if she is still running for chairperson, but will still pay her a month’s pension.

“I don’t dislike (her), but it’s my job to make the decisions on this, and I’ve talked to several people, even some friends of yours, and I believe it’s the right decision to make,” he said.

Hammons said that a new executive director will not be named for several months, because they will have to create a committee.

Even though Baker is gone, Hammons believes Democrats have great leadership roles set in place to get things done. Democrats need to work together, he said.

Some Democrats find this difficult to accept. Oklahoma City school teacher Daryl Gandy said he likes Baker.

“I’m kind of bummed out,” he said.

Gandy said he hasn’t heard anything about Baker going public.

“She wasn’t technically campaigning,” he said.

Gandy said he thinks the situation is a mess, but he sees where Hammons is coming from.

Some constituents rushed to Facebook to defend Baker.

“I’ve worked with Sarah a lot and she is incredible. She has



Sarah Baker. Photo provided

passion, dedication, and has worked so damn hard for this party. This is awful,” Madison Pierce wrote on Christina’s post.

A staff member of the ODP said that Baker had not made an official announcement to staff despite Hammons stating otherwise, and that it is Baker’s right to talk to

people about her life.

Daniel Wright, who also commented on social media, wondered if this is meant to be a political gain for the incumbent of the chair, Hammons.

“I wish I could fire my competition when it suits me,” he said.

Owens questioned Hammons’ interpretation of the party’s constitution.

“Does the Constitution say an Executive Director cannot run for chair? Wouldn’t the current chair running for chair hold the same advantages that an ED would?” he said. “Lastly, she hadn’t announced; was this something Sarah herself told you first, or rumors? I know several have asked her to run and she declined several times.”

Hammons argued that he would be getting paid the same as Baker would have as executive director.

“The people Sarah called, called me. I ignored that until Baker announced her decision to the staff. And yes, she did announce,” he said, “The incumbent chair does have advantages, but not salary or expenses since I don’t take either.”

Mark continued to explain that the ODP’s staff would feel obligated to vote for Baker.

“With an ED in place there is protection between the Chair and staff, but there is no insulation between the ED and staff,” he said.

Baker said she hadn’t actually started campaigning at the time, but is now.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### BIBLE STUDY

Christians on Campus at OCCC host Bible studies Mondays noon to 12:45 p.m. and Tuesdays from 12:30 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. in room 1C5 of the Arts and Humanities building.

### THOMAS FRIEDMAN

**April 27:** The bestselling author and three-time Pulitzer Prize winning Journalist, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Visual & Performing Arts Center Theater. This event is free and open to the public.

### ‘THE 39 STEPS’

**April 27-29:** OCCC’s Theater department offers a send-up of an Alfred Hitchcock suspense thriller, April 27-29, 2017 at 7:30 PM in the Bruce Owen Theater.

### JAZZ ENSEMBLE

**May 1:** OCCC’s Music presents the student Jazz Ensemble at 7:30 p.m. in the Bruce Owen Theater. Admission is free.

### COMMENCEMENT

**May 5:** Graduation ceremony at 7:30 p.m. at the Cox Business Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City.

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# Understanding what it means to get an F

BRANDON KING  
Staff Writer  
staffwriter1@occc.edu

Failure is only as detrimental or determining as you make it.

With finals coming up for colleges across the nation, students are under pressure, quietly and desperately hoping for an A.

"This time of year always kills me in a way that nothing else does," Scott Hillman, a sophomore at Oklahoma State University said. Hillman is working towards his degree in agricultural sciences. "I swear, these are the times that make me think that I won't make it out of this thing. Sure enough I always do. But the thought of an F scares the hell out of me."

Even the brightest students worry about failure.

The weight of the future lies on the shoulders of students simply wishing to do well in their classes. The idea of failure just gives more ground to the perception that failure could total their futures in academia and in the real world.

Hillman said that since his parents stopped funding his education, he depended solely on his own work and diligence. He laughed and talked about how he will think back on "these stressful times."

An "F" on a transcript is enough to send many into a frenzied panic.

But, in the end, is the panic warranted, or even necessary?

In the course of college, the stakes of failure are raised to heights that would make even the boldest of the bunch sweat. But what does it mean to fail in college?

Cici Simon, a 24-year-old sophomore working toward her associate's degree in public relations, said that, "An F for me is a future-wrecking ball."

"An F on my transcript basically means I lose all funding for my school," Simon said. "I have to keep a substantial GPA in order to keep receiving my Pell Grants."

With in-state tuition for Oklahoma City Community College at \$3,391 per semester, the idea that failure is an option seems unacceptable to many students, especially those paying their own way through college.

The state of Oklahoma is the 27th largest economy in the United States with 202.5 billion dollars in December of 2015. However, when looking at the funding for education, it has dropped by 23.9 percent over the past six years under Governor Fallin's leadership.

If an out-of-state student enrolls in the school, the tuition raises to \$8,425. Options are available, including withdrawal of a class with a refund, but they don't help with the overall plan of the individual student.

The promise of education rides on the coattails of capitalistic gains with limited funding to back



Photo illustration by Aaron Cardenas and Brandon King/Pioneer

it, but this should not dampen a student's desire to become better educated.

Students try to do what is necessary to get the grades to obtain the degree they want. Unfortunately more times than not students don't accurately anticipate the workload required for each class.

"My first semester of college I failed two classes," said Haleigh Kalus, a sophomore at Southwestern Oklahoma State University studying to get her English teaching degree.

"I failed those classes for a variety of reasons, from not turning stuff in to missing class a lot. There have been plenty of times where I started to fail, so I gave up and then had to remind myself why I'm doing what I'm doing and kick myself back into gear."

It's when work meant to improve the intellect of the student becomes emotional baggage that the problems arise.

Mid-terms and finals alone have enough force behind the connotation of the words to bring stress into the lives of many college students.

According to a 2014 study at the University of Berkley, roughly 45 percent of students had shared that their academic performance and their well-being was at jeopardy during college. The study went on to say that nearly a third of students meet the criteria for "anxiety or depressive illnesses during their college experience."

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America says that anxiety disorders are one of the most common mental health problems on college campuses.

It is understandable for any student to feel the weight of academia on their shoulders. College was never meant for the weary; it was meant for those

willing to see the future for what it can hold and for those brave enough to chase it for all its worth.

"My best advice for failing a class and freaking out is just to take a deep breath," Klaus said. "Failing a class isn't going to end your college career. Retaking classes really isn't that big of a deal; you just have to refocus, remember your goals, and try again."

Yet students of all ages and experiences are bound to fail a class in college.

"It's a very common conversation we have, unfortunately," Jill Hibblen, the Acting Registrar for OCCC said. Hibblen is in charge of duties such as posting grades each semester, posting academic standings, and student records.

"We probably get students a couple times a week about how this affects me and what I can do to change it," Hibblen said.

It can be discouraging for students to feel trapped between the constraints of the finances of grants or loans and the necessity to have a higher form of education. Many students have dedicated themselves to the motto, "C's get degrees."

"C is maintaining academic progress but it helps to be mindful of how many hours you can take so you don't overwhelm yourself," Hibblen said. "You need to keep in mind what's passing and what'll get you to that next step."

Universities and colleges around the country, including OCCC, offer many services to help students throughout the year such as the Communications Lab, the Student Services Center, and Academic Advising.

Be careful of the hours you choose, choose your courses responsibly, and know that failing does not define your future.

It is simply a bump in the road.



# Legislature: Higher education goes unheard

continued from page 1

that since 2000, there has been a near 200 percent increase in the cost of college tuition per student. Despite the rise in cost, the median family income has stayed static while the income for the top one percent of families has increased steadily.

The Pew Research Institute found that during this same time frame, nationwide, state funding for higher education has dropped 37 percent though college enrollment is increasing.

For college students in Oklahoma, this issue is further complicated by the state's recent \$878 million dollar revenue failure because that failure has translated into increased tuition.

A 2016 budget report compiled by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shows that in fiscal years 2014-2016, the percentage of Oklahoma's total appropriations going to higher education was only 14.4-14.8 percent, the lowest since 1980.

How state lawmakers intend to make up this shortfall is the subject of controversy.

Normally when faced with an economic crisis, the state would pull from the state's Constitutional Reserve fund. The fund was created to collect extra revenue so that money could be saved and used during times of revenue shortage.

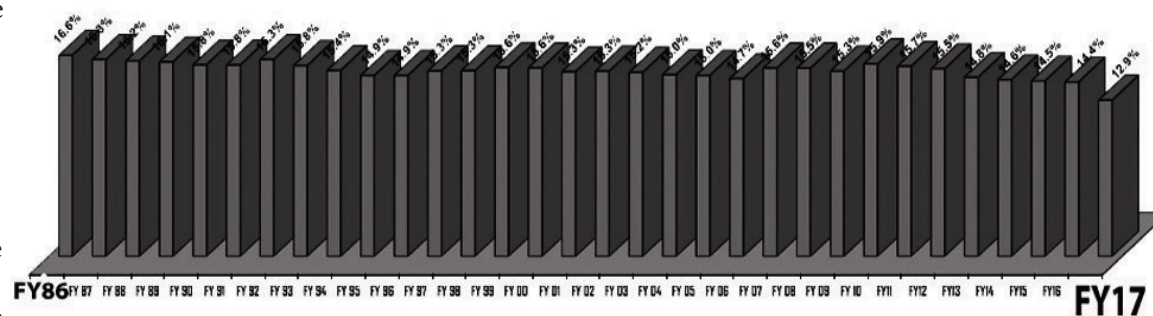
Just three weeks ago State Finance Secretary Preston Doerflinger announced that he had drained the fund down to zero when he used nearly \$300 million to fund state agencies because revenue was coming in slower than expected. That money is usually distributed through the House and Senate appropriations process.

With more budget cuts looming, OCCC President Jerry Steward held a faculty meeting where he addressed concerns about the school's financial future.

"There are legitimate legal questions about whether he had the constitutional authority to borrow that money," Steward said.

To fill the budget hole and the depleted reserve fund, lawmakers must either decrease state spending or increase the money coming into the

**HIGHER EDUCATION PERCENT OF OKLAHOMA TOTAL STATE APPROPRIATIONS**



coffers of the General Revenue Fund from a handful of sources including personal income tax, corporate income tax, sales tax, motor vehicle tax and the gross production tax on oil.

Representative Echols said he might support increasing the Gross Production tax on oil in exchange for removing regulations on horizontal well drilling.

"By doing this I have put Oklahomans to work and I have unlocked profit potential. So at that point it seems fair to me that we turn around and increase the Gross Production tax," he said.

Campaign contribution records show that Echols has received thousands from major oil companies like Chesapeake, Devon, Continental and Chevron.

Initially the state taxed new horizontal wells at only one percent to spur new production and industry growth. In fiscal year 2004, the cost of those tax breaks was \$2 million according to the Oklahoma Policy Institute.

By 2015, that amount increased to \$470 million.

Dorman notes that now, even some in the oil industry support the idea of an increase of up to seven percent tax. The Oklahoma Energy Producers Alliance is one such group.

In early April, the alliance lobbied at the state capitol in support of the increase. This group represents a group of local oil and gas producers.

Horizontal drilling like that advocated for by Echols, drills down vertically like a traditional well and then drills laterally into the porous shale layer. The shale is filled with a mixture of chemicals and highly concentrated saltwater that crack open deposits of precious oil in a process referred to as fracking. Access to these deposits spurred an oil boom in

Oklahoma from 2008-2014 and led to revenue gains for the state.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, during that time, Oklahoma failed to set much of that money back for education. Per pupil funding in Oklahoma fell by nearly 25 percent. The price of oil has fallen since.

House Appropriations and Budget Chair Leslie Osborn, R-Oklahoma City said she remains hopeful that revenue will increase.

"I believe the economy is growing again due to higher oil prices and increased new rig counts drilling across the state. That makes me cautiously hopeful that we will be able to invest in higher education," Osborn said.

Osborn said the state's constitution requires extra revenue generated from the spike in oil prices to be used to refill the rainy day fund first before any appropriations could be funneled towards education.

Dorman said Echols is on the right path to consider an increase in the Gross Production tax on oil. But he disagrees with making that exchange for deregulation on horizontal wells. He said he would rather see the state continue to invest in ecologically conscious green energy like wind turbines.

Former Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating disagrees with Dorman on wind energy. During his tenure as governor, Keating was instrumental in passing the Zero Emissions Tax Credit for the wind energy sector to grow an industry. In recent years Keating, who was once in the mineral industry himself, has become a vocal opponent of this tax credit.

"We gave a lot of substantial tax credits and exemptions, particularly to wind power. The result is that the needs of the state and higher education are jeopardized because we have

given away the revenue base. Everybody should pay their fair share. The wind industry does not pay any tax and the oil and gas industry does," Keating said.

Revenue gained from the wind energy sector will not be available to fund education until 2028.

Along with proposals to increase taxes on the wind and oil sector, earlier this year, Governor Mary Fallin released her plan to fill

the state's budget hole. Her plan incorporates an increase on taxes on nearly 170 services. She has called for an increase in taxes on cigarettes and motor fuel. In addition to these tax increases, her proposal calls on the elimination of corporate income taxes and sales tax on groceries.

But revenue gained from the cigarette tax will automatically go to healthcare and revenue from the motor oil tax will go toward transportation, Steward said.

After the release of the governor's proposal, Democrats and Republicans were critical of her plan.

"I do not support taxes on service. I don't think that's the direction the state of Oklahoma needs to go. I supported my governor. Proud she is my governor, but we are allowed to disagree," Echols said.

Echols does support an increase in the cigarette tax though.

Freshman Representative Mickey Dollens, D-Oklahoma City said the service taxes Fallin proposed would cost Oklahomans about \$1.3 billion dollars.

"Theses are not the people who can afford it," Dollens said. "The worst part is that the people out there making \$20,000 a year are being taxed the same as those making \$2 million a year."

Even so, Echols said he is confident that the parties can come together to fix not only the stated budget issues, but education as well.

"I serve with some of the greatest people I've ever meet, Republicans and Democrats. I mean that with all of my heart. The bad apples get all the press, but the truth is that there are great men and women here trying to make a difference. I believe we will come together and we will pass a budget."



CLASSIFIEDS

LAST ISSUE’S SOLUTION

H	E	I	S	T		X	Y	S	T		I	L	L	S
A	W	O	K	E		V	A	L	E		M	E	A	T
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W	E	R	E			T	A	R	S		N	A	T	T



We are hoping to expand our family through through open, semi-open, or closed adoption. Considering adoption is an amazing act of love for your child and we want to honor your wishes of finding the right adoptive family.

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### WEEKLY CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

1. Snare  
5. A painful muscle spasm  
10. Plenty  
14. Dash  
15. Russian currency  
16. Cain's brother  
17. Expatriation  
19. Two-toed sloth  
20. Help  
21. Jittery  
22. Jagged  
23. Fate  
25. Alphabetical listing of topics  
27. One or more  
28. Rest on one's knees  
31. Put on clothes  
34. Keyboard instrument  
35. Petroleum  
36. Pig sound  
37. Young salmon  
38. Hoodwink  
39. And so forth  
40. Drizzly  
41. Moat  
42. Practice  
44. Not thin  
45. German iris  
46. Blimp  
50. Black-and-white diving bird  
52. Small islands  
54. Actress Lupino  
55. Operatic solo  
56. Groveler  
58. Withdraw gradually  
59. Ceased  
60. Legumes  
61. Sodium chloride  
62. Russian emperors  
63. Doing nothing

**DOWN**

1. Step  
2. Bog hemp  
3. Corrosives  
4. Dowel  
5. Crevice  
6. Full of ruts  
7. Nile bird  
8. In an overly sweet manner  
9. Cognizance  
10. Victor's wreath  
11. Offensive  
12. Popular hot beverages  
13. Swing around  
18. Showers  
22. Biblical garden  
24. Chore  
26. Tidy  
28. Danish monetary unit  
29. Bites  
30. Delight  
31. One who accomplishes  
32. Liturgy  
33. Idiomatic  
34. Elisions  
37. Indian dress  
38. Specks  
40. Unusual  
41. The language of Persia  
43. Straying  
44. Meadows  
46. Change  
47. Walked a trail  
48. Something to shoot for  
49. Analyze syntactically  
50. Mouths  
51. Urine component  
53. Fizzy drink  
56. Wager  
57. Consumer Price Index

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JAN 15 HOME TEAM DOUBLE HEADER  
NORMAN (STAR SKATE)

FEB 12 ALL STARS VS. OKMRD  
NORMAN (STAR SKATE) & TORNADO ALLEY VS. TULSA COUNTY  
MAR 26 HOME TEAM DOUBLE HEADER  
NORMAN (STAR SKATE)

APR 22 ALL STARS & TORNADO ALLEY (OPPONENTS TBD)  
EDMOND (ARCTIC EDGE)

MAY 19-21 SOONER SKATE TOURNAMENT  
EDMOND (ARCTIC EDGE)

JUL 15 HOME TEAM DOUBLE HEADER  
EDMOND (ARCTIC EDGE)

AUG 5 HOME TEAM CHAMPS  
EDMOND (ARCTIC EDGE)



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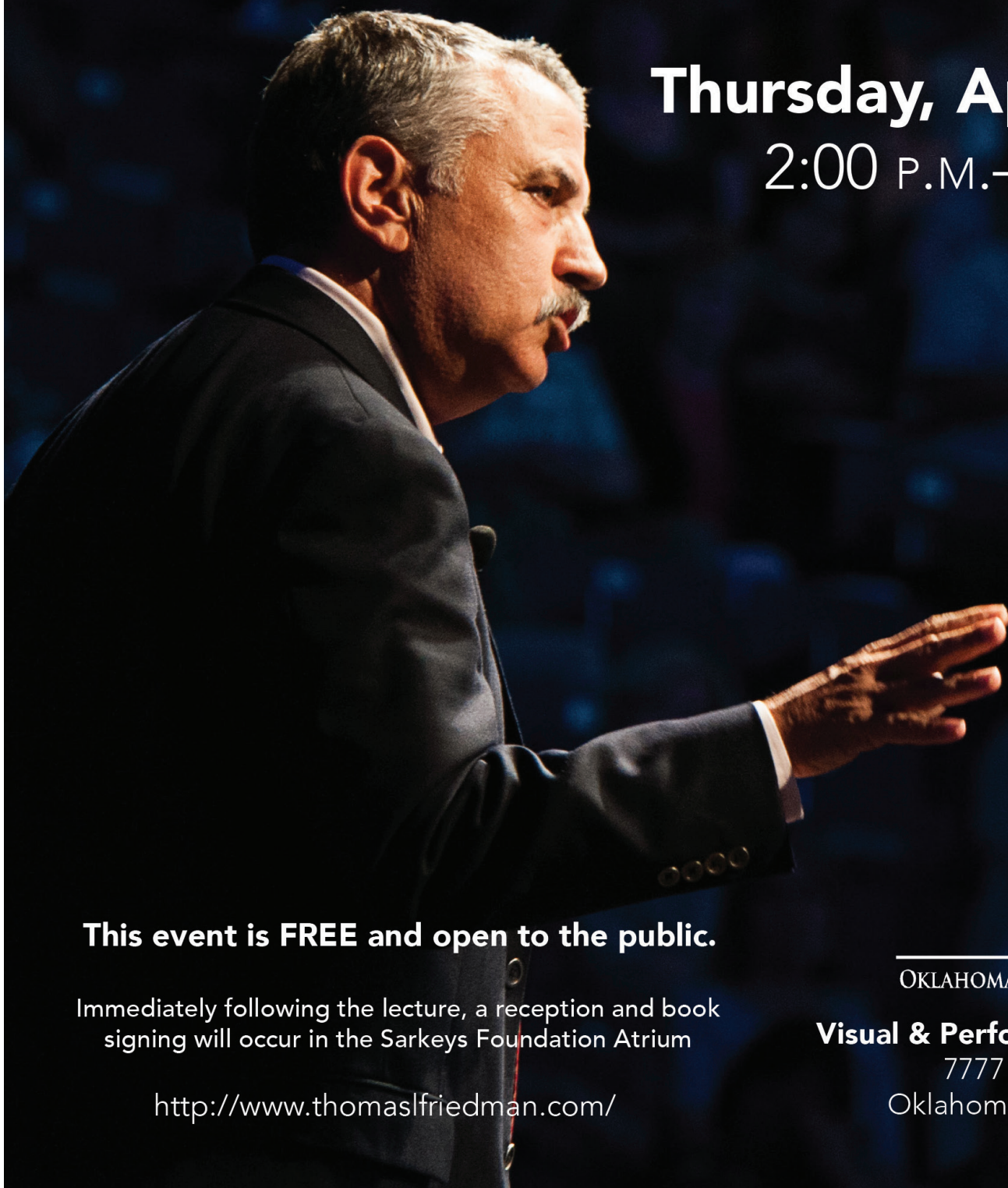
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**Thursday, April 27, 2017**

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