SE celebrates initiatives, Center for Student Success

Dignitaries from throughout Oklahoma joined Chancellor Glen D. Johnson, regents, and tribal leaders Jan. 24 for the “Celebration of Student Success Through Partnerships” event at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

The celebration highlighted Oklahoma’s “Complete College America” (CCA) initiative with examples of successful programs and partnerships in place at Southeastern and around the state.

Activities began at 3 p.m. with a reception in the Glen D. Johnson Student Union loft while the program started at 3:30 p.m. in the atrium of the union.

Joining Chancellor Johnson on the program were Southeastern president Larry Minks, State Regent John Massey, Regional University System of Oklahoma Regent and Chair Terry Matlock, Chief Gregory Pyle of The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and Governor Bill Anoatubby of the Chickasaw Nation.

Following this event, a ribbon cutting was held for the Center for Student Success building, located in the old Campus bookstore/Magnolia Room. This one-stop facility includes the Academic Advising and Outreach Center, the Native American Center for Student Success, the Learning Center, the Writing Center, and the Office of Freshman Programs.

At the beginning of the CCA initiative, state colleges and universities annually awarded 30,500 degrees. CCA’s goal is to increase that number 67 percent so that by 2023 Oklahoma colleges and universities will annually award 50,900 college degrees. During the 2011-12 academic year, state colleges and universities awarded 33,499 degrees/certificates.

Major initiatives toward this goal are already under way, including working with K-12 by focusing on college readiness, transforming remediation, expanding collaboration with CareerTech, enhancing adult degree completion efforts, and tracking and rewarding improvements in degree completion.

Due to Oklahoma’s high level of collaboration, policy framework and long-term commitment to completion goal, CCA has designated Oklahoma as its national model for degree completion.
Chorale performs in Europe to warm response

The Southeastern Chorale’s recent performance tour to Europe was a huge success. Performing in front of full houses in Budapest, Vienna, and Prague, the Chorale gave multiple encores in each venue. The Chorale, under the direction of Dr. Stacy Weger, performed a varied repertoire ranging from Christmas music to American church music and spirituals.

The choir began its tour in December in Budapest, singing at the Baroque church St. Michael’s. For many of the students this became the highlight of the tour musically. “I was overwhelmed for the level of response from the audience members,” said Nicholas Vance, a Music Education major from Denton, Texas. “We were connected to them in a very noticeable way. Their faces showed that connection and inspired us to sing at even a higher level.”

From there, the Chorale moved on to sing at Haydn Hall in the Esterhazy summer palace in Eisenstadt. The group performed a short set in the space where Joseph Haydn, one of the most prolific composers during the Classical period, conducted and premiered many of his works. While there, they also toured Haydn’s home and burial site.

In Vienna, the Chorale sang at two memorable venues. The first was St. Stephen’s Cathedral, one of the most noted cathedrals in Europe. The Chorale used this time to focus on sacred Christmas music, with a performance taking place immediately after mass.

The second performance took place in the Minoritenkirche, which was still beautifully decorated for the Christmas season with greenery and candlelight. The space lent a special ambience for performance. “I was most concerned about performing for the Viennese,” Weger said. “They are, as a whole, a very knowledgeable and discerning audience. So much of our Western music has originated in Vienna, and those ideas spread around the world. The Chorale was up to this challenge, giving two encore performances at this concert. I was so pleased and proud of their efforts.”

While in Vienna, the students had the opportunity to visit the gravesites of Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, and Strauss, and the memorial to Mozart. They also were granted the opportunity to bring in the New Year by attending “Le Grand Ball” in the Hofburg Palace. The huge palace serves as the traditional venue for the Viennese debutantes to be presented at New Year’s Eve. The entire palace was filled with people waltzing in the New Year to “The Blue Danube.”

From there, the Chorale moved on to Prague in the Czech Republic. For many, this was a favorite place to visit because so much of its original architecture remains, creating a magical venue when lit up for the holiday season. The choir performed at St. Martin’s in the Wall. “We were so close to the audience you could hear their reactions to our singing,” said Aaron Williams, president of the Chorale. “When we sang “Amazing Grace,” you could hear audience members humming along quietly with us. That choked many of us up a bit.”

SE to host Native American Higher Ed Conference

Southeastern Oklahoma State University will host the Oklahoma Native American Students in Higher Education (ONASHE) Conference February 22-23.

The goal of the conference is to provide opportunities for Native American students and professionals from various institutions across the state of Oklahoma to continue to develop and strengthen their leadership skills by interacting with current tribal leaders, participating in workshops relevant to contemporary student and leadership issues, and creating powerful networks promoting higher education for Native American students.

The theme for the 2013 ONASHE conference is “The Roots of Our Generation Perpetuating Unification.”

“The conference provides an excellent opportunity to Oklahoma Native American college students to explore potential careers while connecting those careers and their education to cultural interests,” said Chris Wesberry, director of the Southeastern Native American Center for Student Success.
Survey says SE ranks high in student satisfaction

The survey says that students at Southeastern Oklahoma State University are satisfied that the University is meeting and, in many cases, exceeding their expectations. In fact, student satisfaction is higher at Southeastern when compared to results nationally at other four-year institutions.

The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) was administered to 447 Southeastern students in the spring and fall of 2012. The SSI is one tool utilized in assessing student satisfaction and priorities among various categories.

When asked if their college experience has met their expectations so far, 88% of Southeastern respondents said expectations were met or exceeded, compared to the national satisfaction average of 84%.

According to the survey results, Southeastern students listed the following categories as most important: Academic Advising, Instructional Effectiveness, Safety and Security, Registration Effectiveness, Recruitment and Financial Aid. In all five areas, Southeastern rated above the national average in satisfaction percentages.

Among the highest levels of satisfaction were Academic Advising and Institutional Effectiveness – the two categories that Southeastern students also ranked as most important.

Southeastern students also gave the University high marks in such categories as Concern for the Individual, Student Centeredness, Registration Effectiveness, Recruitment and Financial Aid, Campus Life, and Service Excellence.

“I think these survey results confirm that our students are pleased with the quality of educational opportunities they are being afforded at the University,” said Southeastern president Larry Minks. “We strive to provide an environment and support system that assists students in reaching their highest level of potential, both in and out of the classroom. As we recruit new students, we emphasize the importance of the individual attention they will receive from their professors and advisors at Southeastern. The results are also a reflection of the dedication of the faculty and staff that we have in place at Southeastern.”

This is the first time the SSI has been administered to Southeastern students since 2007.

Kathy Jo Daniel, a junior nursing major from Coleman, Oklahoma, says Southeastern has more than met her expectations.

“Academically, it has definitely met my expectations – all of my biology classes have been very challenging, but also very rewarding. I chose Southeastern for several reasons: First of all, I wanted to stay close to home. I came from a small school (graduating class of nine) and if I had questions I wanted to be able to visit with my professors outside the classroom. And I knew Southeastern would have all the classes I needed for my major.”

Daniel is a member of the President’s Leadership Class (PLC) and also received the O.J. Harvey Native American scholarship. Last fall, she was honored with the Top 10 Freshmen Award. Outside the classroom, she is employed in the Southeastern Admissions Office, where she assists prospective students in a variety of ways.

Daniel’s parents are also Southeastern graduates.

Katie Whitley, a freshman from Durant, has also been pleased with her experiences at Southeastern.

The Durant High School graduate is undecided on a major, but in addition to her studies, has been active in the Student Government Association and PLC.

“I’ve only been here one semester, but I have been able to meet new friends and build new relationships in my classes and through my involvement with SGA and PLC,” she said. “I looked at a couple of other schools, but I wanted a smaller school with familiar surroundings.”

Like Daniel, Whitley’s parents are Southeastern graduates.

Academic Advising and Instructional Effectiveness receive high marks and comments from the students.

The survey indicated that students believed that the content of the courses within their majors is valuable, and that the instruction is excellent in their major fields/most of their classes. These results from SSI would seem to be in line with the University’s mission of providing “an environment of academic excellence.”

Students were also pleased with the assistance they received from academic advising. They noted that their academic advisor is approachable, knowledgeable about their major, and concerned about their success as an individual.

Save the Date!
Southeastern Homecoming is October 4 & 5, 2013
MLK Day a time for service

Southeastern Oklahoma State University celebrated the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on Monday, Jan. 21. This marks Southeastern’s 15th consecutive year as a part of the MLK Jr. Day of Service.

The Day of Service is organized by Southeastern’s Office of Student Life and the Multicultural Office. More than 1,000 University students, faculty, staff and community members have participated in this event over the years.

Service areas were the Wapanucka City Water Project and local food banks.

University to host “Storm Ready” program

With the potential of stormy spring weather just around the corner, Southeastern Oklahoma State University is teaming up with the National Weather Service and Durant/Bryan County Emergency Management Office for an informational presentation.

The “Storm Ready” presentation is scheduled for Wednesday, February 20, from 2–4 p.m. in the Southeastern Ballroom. The University community, area school officials, and the general public are encouraged to attend.

Presenters include Rick Smith, a warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service (NWS) in Norman, Oklahoma, and James Dalton, director of the Durant/Bryan County Emergency Management office.

Among the topics to be covered are outdoor emergency warning devices, shelters, cloud and storm recognition, and storm safety tips. Videos of actual tornadoes will also be shown. A question-and-answer session will conclude the program.