Flight team advances to nationals after regional win

The Southeastern Oklahoma State University aviation program has a long and proud history of excellence.

A new chapter was added to this history Oct. 8-12 when the Southeastern Flight Team was crowned champions of the National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) Region VI competition. Southeastern, which hosted the event, placed first overall, as well as in both the ground and flying events.

The 13-member team now advances to national competition, scheduled for May 6-11 at The Ohio State University.

“This is a great accomplishment for Southeastern,” said Southeastern president Larry Minks. “Our aviation sciences institute is to be congratulated for putting together a first-class event to make the city and University proud. And the results demonstrate the quality of programs we have in place.”

Dr. David Conway serves as director of the Southeastern Aviation Sciences Institute.

“I am extremely proud of the SE Flight Team — their hard work and dedication resulted in winning first place as well as being named Region VI Champions,” Conway said. “Congratulations to all the team members, professor George Jacox (flight team advisor), professor Kyle Thomas (Region VI competition coordinator), and Amanda Steele (Region VI President).”

Team members are Jordan Powell (captain), Ping Cheng, Ryan Gornto, Scott Sundstrom, Robert Jacobs (captain), Nathan Alcantara, Douglas Cobb, Alec Maloy, Nikola Topalovic, Michael Odea (captain), Joshua Ashcraft, Greg Eichten, and David Robinson.

“This was such an amazing week for the Southeastern Aviation Sciences Institute,” said Kyle Thomas. “What a great group of young men. Thanks to all who made this week possible.”

Added George Jacox: “This group of students worked very hard and it paid off for them. We look forward to competing in nationals next spring.”

All flying events and Aircraft Preflight Inspection were held at Eaker Field; the remaining ground events were on the Southeastern campus.

Flying Events were Power Off Landing, Short Field Approach and Landing, Navigation, Message Drop, IFR Precision Flight, and IFR Simulated Flight.

Ground Events included Computer Accuracy, Ground Trainer, Aircraft Preflight Inspection, Aircraft Recognition, Simulated Comprehensive Aircraft Navigation (SCAN), and Electronic Flight Computer.

On Friday, Oct. 12, the NIFA Region VI awards banquet was held in the Choctaw Resort Conference Center ballroom. Guest speaker was James Hanny, first aviation graduate from Southeastern (’68) and a Distinguished Alumnus of the University. Hanny is also a former president of the Southeastern Alumni Association.

In the overall competition, Southeastern took first place with 543 points. Kansas State University-Salina was the runner-up with 426 points, University of Nebraska-Omaha third with 380, University of Oklahoma fourth with 320, University of Central Missouri fifth with 290, Parks College of St. Louis University sixth with 232, Oklahoma State University seventh with 225, and Spartan College of Aeronautics eighth with 111.
Bryon Clark’s interest in bats dates back to his childhood days on the family farm in Iowa.

“We were renovating our farmhouse and one day as they pulled the shingles off the roof we discovered a bat in between the rafters,” Clark recalled. “I was in the first grade at the time and I took it in a box to school for show and tell. Afterward, I took the bat home and released it. I guess I’ve been interested in bats ever since.”

Keep in mind that this was the 1960s, a simpler time when “show and tell” was not regulated like it might be today and all types of exotic creatures appeared in the classroom.

Today, Dr. Clark is Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs -- Student Learning and Accreditation at Southeastern Oklahoma State University and a longtime biology professor. His study of bats has taken him across the United States and abroad.

And come Halloween time, he is often asked to share his knowledge of the flying creatures in presentations to students and adults alike.

“I probably make eight to 10 presentations a year,” Clark said. “In addition to local schools, I’ve traveled to such places as Ardmore, Stillwater, Idabel, Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, and even Florida for programs.”

His “Amazing World of Bats” presentation normally lasts 30-45 minutes, with plenty of time for questions, whether he’s at an elementary/middle school or civic club. Clark’s traveled the educational bat circuit for some 25 years and the tradition has developed quite a following.

Worldwide, there are approximately 1,100 species of bats, according to Clark, including 22 types in Oklahoma and 32 in Texas. In southeast Oklahoma, the most common is the Eastern Red bat.

“In many cases, bats get a bad rap,” he said. “In movies and on television, they’re often characterized as blood-sucking vampires. There are actually three types of vampire bats but none regularly occurs in the United States. In fact, bats provide many beneficial services such as eating insect pests and pollinating several economically important plants in tropical areas.

“One of the biggest misconceptions about bats is that most all of them carry rabies when in fact, a recent scientific study found that only about 1% of bats in natural populations in the United States and Canada are carriers; this percentage increases to about 6% for the bats most commonly encountered by people. That does not mean that you should not be careful. If you see a bat, especially one that is on the ground and appears to be sick, do not touch it with your bare hands but carefully remove the bat from the area so that it doesn’t bite an unsuspecting child or pet.”

Other frequent questions that fly Clark’s way are ‘how long do bats live?’ and ‘why do they hang upside down?’

“The life expectancy for bats in this region can range from 20 to 30 years,” he said. “By hanging from the ceiling of caves, they are protected from predators.”

Over the years, Clark has received a number of phone calls from concerned citizens who were fearful that bats had infested their dwellings.

In some cases, he noted that instead of bats, birds known as chimney swifts were the culprit.

However, on other occasions, Clark has discovered the real thing.

In one such instance, he rescued some 50 big brown bats from a business establishment. It seems that the bats had decided to use the second floor as a roosting site. Clark frantically collected the bats and moved them to a safe location.

“These are tough times for bat populations in the United States,” he said. “White-nosed syndrome has killed about 5.7 million bats since first being discovered in 2006 and many bats have lost their roost sites in caves and mines.”

Clark is just one of many Southeastern faculty/staff members who lend their expertise volunteering in various capacities in the community.

As a matter of fact, The Corporation for National and Community Service and the U.S. Department of Education named Southeastern Oklahoma State University to the 2012 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. This honor is in recognition of schools for their commitment to improving their communities through community service and service learning.

During the 2010-2011 academic year, more than 760 individuals from Southeastern (students-faculty-staff) completed some 30,000 hours of community service activity.

Clark joined the University faculty in 1990, after completing his post-doctoral studies at Oklahoma State University, and having having earned his Ph.D. at Kansas State University, his master’s at Western Illinois University, and his bachelor’s at Central College (Iowa).
Southeastern celebrates Homecoming

“Faithful to the Gold and Blue” was the theme of Homecoming this year at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Three days (Sept. 27-28-29) of events were held as part of the celebration, including such traditional events as the Whang Bang Alumni Golf Tournament, the Distinguished Alumni Awards Banquet, Former Athletes’ Breakfast, and football game.

Honored as Distinguished Alumni this year were Captain Gail Gorski, ('74), Mr. Steve Robinson ('86), and Mr. Towana Spivey ('68).

Recognized with the Distinguished Former Faculty award were Dr. Walter Britt, Dr. Elbert Hill, and Dr. Pat Robbins ('60).

The Benefactor award was presented to the family of the late Albert H. Brigance ('55). In addition, the grand opening of the Albert H. Brigance Curriculum and Assessment Center was held on Thursday, September 27, in Southeastern Oklahoma State University’s Henry G. Bennett Memorial Library.

The Heritage Award, which honors individuals who have impacted the history of Southeastern in some unique way, was presented to the family of the late Dr. Bernice Crockett ('34).

Royalty

Amanda Scott, junior psychology major from Ardmore, and Payton Werner, sophomore social studies major from Broken Bow, were crowned Homecoming Queen and King. Congratulating them is Southeastern president Larry Minks.

Distinguished Alumni 2012

Honored as Distinguished Alumni were, clockwise, from left, Towana Spivey, Captain Gail Gorski, and Steve Robinson. A banquet to recognize all of this year’s homecoming honorees was held September 28 in the Visual & Performing Arts Center.

Native November events scheduled throughout the month

Southeastern Oklahoma State University’s Native November celebration opens with a performance of “To Us It Wasn’t Code.” The play, a collaboration between Southeastern and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, debuted last summer at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian as part of Choctaw Days.

The production covers the history of the World War II Choctaw Code Talkers and the vital role they played in the war. The event is scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 1, in the Fine Arts Little Theater on campus.

Events are scheduled throughout the month and all are free and open to the public.

Nov. 3 – Recognition of Native American Scholarships (Harvey and Parsons Scholars) between the third and fourth quarters of the Southeastern-Harding football game.

Nov. 6 – Professional Development: Chickasaw Department of Homeland Affairs (2-4 p.m., Russell Building Room 300)

Nov. 7 – SE Live and Native American Student Visitation (9 a.m.-3 p.m., Montgomery Auditorium)

Nov. 17 – Chickasaw Cultural Center field trip to Sulphur (8:15 a.m.-3 p.m.) Visit Traditional Village; see demonstration of the “Stomp Dance;” view 17-minute film “Behind the Scenes” on 40-foot by 60-foot screen; lunch at noon; Chikasha Poya Exhibit Hall tour; explore the CCC campus, visit Honor Garden, Gallery and Gift Shop.

Nov. 26 – Mini-Choctaw Days on campus as Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma will present dancing, artists and other cultural demonstrations.
Grand opening held for Brigance Curriculum and Assessment Center

The grand opening of the Albert H. Brigance Curriculum and Assessment Center was September 27 at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

The Center is housed in the Henry G. Bennett Memorial Library on campus and was made possible by a generous gift from the Brigance family.

Albert Brigance ('55) was honored as a Southeastern Oklahoma State University Distinguished Alumnus in 1999.

The Brigance Center will serve as a one-stop shop for Elementary Education majors, housing diagnostic materials, reading and literacy resources, and other materials.

Brigance was nationally recognized as an early childhood education and resource specialist. He created the first comprehensive criterion-referenced Inventory of Basic Skills, which became the most widely used instrument for assessment evaluation, student academic placement, individual education plans (IEPs) and instructional planning.

The family of the late Albert Brigance was recognized as the 2012 Benefactor Award recipient at the Distinguished Awards banquet in the Visual and Performing Arts Center as part of Homecoming activities.

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