

# An all-time high

*Southeastern fall enrollment sets record with 5,376 students*

In terms of enrollment, Southeastern Oklahoma State University is the fastest-growing university in Oklahoma over the last 10 years.

That trend is continuing this fall as the University announced an all-time enrollment record of 5,376 students. The previous record was set in Fall 2020, with an enrollment of 5,339 students.

Also of note is that first-time freshman enrollment is up 15.4% from last fall.

“We are continuing to see growth in our graduate enrollment,” said Southeastern president Thomas Newsom. “But our freshman class is also up significantly, which means our occupancy rate is higher in the residence halls – we have almost 100 more students living on campus than we did last fall. We have implemented some initiatives to attract face-to-face students, which we believe are paying off. And I think our accessibility, affordability (waiving of out-of-state tuition, increased scholarships and financial aid) and delivery options continue to be important to students. We are optimistic



*Social Sciences professor Glenn Melancon lectures to students in class as a record number of students are enrolled at Southeastern this fall.*

about continuing to grow our enrollment. It is a great day to be at Southeastern.”

Last fall’s enrollment was 5,328 students.

## Stacy Shepherd, Semple Family to be honored at Homecoming



*Shepherd*

An individual and a family with deep roots to Southeastern Oklahoma State University will be honored during Homecoming festivities on Oct. 21-22.

Stacy Shepherd, Executive Officer of Member Services at Choctaw Nation, will receive the Distinguished Alumna Award, while the Semple Family will be honored with the Benefactor Award. The Distinguished Awards banquet will be held Friday, Oct. 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the Visual & Performing Arts Center.

Shepherd earned a bachelor’s degree in English Education in 1980, and a master’s in secondary administration in 1987. She also received her secondary principal certification at Southeastern in 1988. As an undergraduate, she was a member of the Cardinal Key Honor Society.

In her role as executive officer, Shepherd is focused on providing opportunities for growth and prosperity for tribal members in the departments of Housing, Education, Culture, Outreach, and Special Services, as well as preserving the Choctaw Language. Her previous roles with the Choctaw Nation include Academic Employment Specialist in the Career Development department and the revitalization of the Chahta Foundation, a 501(c)3 Nonprofit that supports Tribal Members in reaching full potential through scholarships, wellness, and tradition.

Shepherd is the great granddaughter of Joseph H. Goforth, a Chickasaw who earned his law

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## Semple Family to receive Benefactor

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degree from Vanderbilt University School of Law in 1900 and became the first Native American judge in Indian Territory. She is the granddaughter of Jesse Goforth Clark, who was both Chickasaw Choctaw and attended Oklahoma Presbyterian College, and the daughter of former Choctaw Nation Executive Director of Education Joy Culbreath (a recipient of the SE Distinguished Alumna Award in 2017).

Shepherd represented Durant ISD as a top 12 finalist for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year in 2000 (Runner Up) and in 2010. She completed her teaching career after 30 years in Oklahoma public education. One of her greatest achievements was allowing students to explore the teaching profession through the Teacher Cadet program, mentoring a future teacher through college, and coaching a former student as a first-year colleague. As a Choctaw tribal member, Shepherd was afforded the opportunity to facilitate the Choctaw Language at Durant High School, where she studied alongside her students and has completed 18 hours of Choctaw Language at Southeastern.

Shepherd and her husband Danny reside in Durant. They have one son, two daughters, four grandsons, and one granddaughter.

Her sisters -- Paula Harp and Richelle Acker -- are also Southeastern graduates. Harp is senior director of school programs for the Choctaws and is a Southeastern Alumni Association Board member, while Acker is associate department director of admissions at Vanderbilt Law School.

And Shepherd's daughter -- Lauren Garner -- is continuing the SE tradition as she serves as executive director for tribal relations at the University.

The SE Benefactor Award will be presented to the Semple Family.

Inspired by the legacy of their pioneer Choctaw family and the strong impact it had on the history of Durant, Southeastern, and Bryan County, as well as the desire to contribute to the future of Southeastern students and to educate future generations, the Semples were proud to fund the Semple Family Museum of Native American Art.

The Museum, which held its grand opening in the fall of 2021, is located north of the Fine Arts Building and Russell Building on Montgomery/Dunlap Drive. It serves as the permanent home of Southeastern Oklahoma State University's extensive Native American Art Collection that represents 26 federally recognized tribes and 80 plus artists.

The 5,000 square-foot multi-level facility features an art gallery, an audio-visual room, reception area, storage, a balcony and walkout patio. The patio overlooks the historic Amphitheater, which was built by Southeastern students. Professors C.B. French (a cousin of the Semples), and E.B. Robbins directed the students through the construction, which was funded by the Civil Works Administration in 1934.



*The Semple Family will be honored with the Benefactor Award during Homecoming this fall. Left to right, Bill "Billy" Semple (deceased), Janie Semple Umsted, Dr. Allen William Semple (deceased), Frank Semple, Susan Semple, and Sarah Semple Brown.*

The establishment of such a museum had been on the minds of the Semples for a number of years. Frank Semple, a retired energy industry executive, Janie Semple Umsted, a local artist and curator of the Museum, and Sarah Semple Brown, a Denver-based architect who designed the museum, were raised in Durant and are sixth-generation Oklahomans. Their parents were Dr. Allen William Semple and Jane French Semple. Upon the death of their oldest brother, Bill (Billy) in 2016, the dream of a museum became a family commitment.

The Semple Family are members of the Choctaw Nation and direct descendants of their grandfather Charles Carl Semple, an original enrollee.

Following is the schedule of homecoming events, with more to be added:

Friday, October 21

Whang Bang Golf Tournament -- Chickasaw Pointe Golf Club -- 8 a.m. Registration, 9 a.m. Shotgun Start  
Distinguished Awards Banquet -- Visual & Performing Arts Center -- 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 22

Tailgate Alley -- Live bands, reunions, food -- 11 a.m. -- 1:30 p.m.

The Walk, wish the football team luck after pre-game warm-up -- 1:40 p.m.

Pre-game Recognition of Distinguished Alumni Honorees -- Paul Laird Field -- 1:50 p.m.

Kickoff: Southeastern vs Oklahoma Baptist -- Paul Laird Field -- 2 p.m.

Additional information and details will be announced in the coming weeks.

For more information, call 580-745-2288.

## Senior spends summer studying opera in Europe

College students spend their summers in a variety of ways, from working to taking classes to enjoying a vacation. But not many did what Lauren Manon Gibson did, which included a little of all of the above. Gibson, a senior at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, studied and sang opera in Europe this summer. The vocal performance major from Antlers, Oklahoma, successfully auditioned and was accepted into two European study programs in opera and classical music.

“Music has always been very special to me, and some of my earliest childhood photos depict me holding a microphone,” Gibson said. “However, my love for classical performance began in high school and grew once I reached Southeastern. I have vivid memories of sitting in a math class and daydreaming about the things that I got to do this summer -- singing in old Italian churches and meeting some of the most talented performers in opera.”

Her summer began with “Opera In Concert,” a music and language program hosted at the University of Urbino in Urbino, Italy. She was one of seven students from the United States participating in the program; mornings were spent in four-hour blocks of Italian language classes with music and coaching on Italian arias, duets, and song repertoire, with afternoons at the Capella Musicale.

“As amazing as it all was, the best part was the performing,” Gibson said. “We performed in a pilgrimage church near a winery that was several hundred years old.”

Gibson’s second summer program excursion began at The American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria, just a couple of weeks following the Italian program. Students participating in the AIMS program choose to audition in the Opera Studio or the Lieder Studio for a 6-week intensive educational program. Gibson is in the vocal studio of Dr. Jeremy Blackwood, Dean of Graduate Studies and Associate



*Lauren Gibson spent her summer studying and performing opera and classical music in Europe.*

Professor of Voice in the Department of Music at Southeastern.

“I am extremely proud of Lauren,” Blackwood said. “Her acceptance into the two summer programs is a testament to her hard work and determination to hone her vocal performance skills. I am honored that I can be along for Lauren’s journey – to help guide her toward meeting her goals in the world of opera and classical singing. I have no doubt that she will do well in the future.”

Gibson said her summer abroad provided her with inspiration as she continues her education.

“I am incredibly proud of myself and what I have achieved,” she said. “This summer has only inspired me to continue learning and growing and to enjoy the process, not the goal. I’m so excited to be back at Southeastern to finish my studies in vocal performance and plan my next step. Now that I’m back, all my focus goes into “Suor Angelica.”

She will be performing the title role in Southeastern’s production of “Suor Angelica” in October.

## SE hosting regional collegiate flying competition Oct. 16-20

Southeastern Oklahoma State University is hosting the National Intercollegiate Flying Association’s (NIFA) Region IV SAFECON Oct. 16-20.

Ten flight teams from colleges and universities in Oklahoma, Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana will be vying to earn an invitation to the national SAFECON (Safety and Flight Evaluation Conference) next spring in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Teams will compete in the following events:

### Ground Events

SCAN (Simulated Comprehensive Aircraft Navigation), E6B (Manual Flight Computer), Aircraft Recognition, SIM, Preflight Inspection

### Flight Events

Power Off Landings, Short-Field Landing, Message Drop, Navigation

Among the teams scheduled to compete are Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma State University, Delta State University, Louisiana Tech University, and LeTourneau University.

# Calendar of Events

## October

- 1 -- Theatre at SE presents “Keely and Du,” Visual & Performing Arts Center, 7:30 p.m.
- 5 -- SE Live recruiting event
- 14 -- Fall Break
- 14 -- Spirit of the Hawk Gala and Hall of Fame Induction
- 16-20 – SE hosting National Intercollegiate Flying Association’s (NIFA) Region IV SAFECON competition
- 19 -- Women in Entrepreneurship Virtual Zoom Conference, noon
- 21-22 -- Homecoming
- 29 -- Presidential Partners

## November

- 4 -- Top 10 Freshman Recognition ceremony, Glen D. Johnson Student Union auditorium, 3 p.m.

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*SE Live! is just one of many events on the calendar for the Southeastern Admissions and Recruitment Office. Left to right are, Shantell Boone (counselor-recruiter), Tonya Tollett (assistant director), Jennifer Rudolf (scholarship advisor-OPM coordinator), Shelly Key (associate vice president for enrollment management), Kristen Wolf (counselor-recruiter), Baily Hendrickson (counselor-recruiter), Christopher Ellison (athletic academic advisor), Natalie Weaver (coordinator), Ashlee Carr (counselor-recruiter), and Kallie Wieldt (immigration advisor).*

## *SE Live! scheduled for Oct. 5*

SE Live! – the largest open house for high school and transfer students interested in attending Southeastern Oklahoma State University – is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 5, at the Durant campus.

The event, sponsored by the Office of Admissions and Recruitment, is scheduled for 9 a.m. -- 2 p.m. Check-in begins at 8 a.m., with the opening session to follow at 9 in Montgomery Auditorium.

SE Live! offers students an up close and personal glimpse into a typical day on the University campus. Following the opening session, students will transition into breakout sessions where they will have the opportunity to hear faculty, staff, and students share information on academic programs and degrees, scholarship opportunities, admission requirements, campus events and residence life. The day concludes with lunch and optional campus tours.

All attendees are also eligible to win one of multiple \$1,000 scholarship awards.