Oklahoma wrestling stand-out named head wrestling coach

Otero Junior College is pleased to announce the hiring of Christopher Hacker, a four-time Oklahoma High School wrestling champion and former University of Nebraska wrestler.

Otero Junior College is the first two-year institution in Colorado to announce the addition of a Wrestling program under the National Junior College Athletic Association, Region IX.

OJC’s athletic director, Gary Addington, is excited about what this will mean for southeast Colorado.

“This is going to be good for the Arkansas Valley with its strong wrestling tradition that spans all the way to the Kansas border,” said Addington. “Having this program gives opportunities to kids to continue their education and participate in a sport they love; kids who otherwise may not have seen those opportunities Otero is a two-year college who opens doors to everybody. These wrestlers will not only have the opportunity to complete a two-year degree, but also have an increased opportunity to move on to both wrestle and study at a four year school,” explained Addington.

Addington stated that OJC is extremely proud of the young man that has been hired to build this exciting new program. Head Coach Chris Hacker is a two-time high school state wrestling champion from Oklahoma. He is a four-time high school champion in both Greco and Freestyle wrestling. He is a high school All American wrestler and was a collegiate wrestler for the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

While at Nebraska, Hacker earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology. He went on to the University of Central Oklahoma to earn a Master of Education degree. While earning his master’s degree, Hacker was a graduate assistant coach for three years at Central Oklahoma. While being mentored by head coach, David James, who has been with the program for over 30 years, Hacker helped coach 10 All-American wrestlers, three National Champions and two NCAA Top 5 Team finishers.

Hacker will spend the next few months, prior to the 2016-2017 academic year, recruiting for OJC’s inaugural team. Hacker hopes to bring in up to 40 student athletes to vie for a spot on the team and build the foundation for the new program.

To accommodate the new athletic program, OJC will be building two new units in the Conley Student Housing Complex to house the additional student athletes. The team will initially wrestle open tournaments in Kansas and Wyoming as well as dual meets with teams in the Colorado region.

“Other NJCAA Region IX colleges will soon be adding wrestling to their athletic programs as well, so within a few short years I think we are going to see wrestling become one of the premier athletic sports in Region IX,” said Addington. “OJC will approach this new sport as we have done all our other sports, we demand high standards of excellence in both athletics and academics. Academics comes first at OJC and we do all we can to provide the support student athletes need be successful both in the classroom and in their athletic competitions.”

For more information about the new OJC Wrestling Program, go to www.ojc.edu and click on Athletics. Coach Hacker can be contacted at 719-384-6913 or by email: Christopher.Hacker@ojc.edu
Dr. Walter “Mack” Myers inducted into CSU DARE Hall of Fame

For the past three years, the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (DARE) at Colorado State University has recognized some of its outstanding alumni by inducting them into the DARE Hall of Fame. Dr. Walter “Mack” Myers, Agricultural Business Management Faculty at Otero Junior College, was recently named as a 2016 inductee.

Dr. Myers is a native of Las Animas, where he grew up on a crop and livestock farm. He is a 1967 graduate in agricultural economics from CSU. After earning a Master of Science degree in 1969, Myers went to Oklahoma State University to pursue a PhD.

After completing his PhD in 1973, Myers started a distinguished career in agricultural commodity management. His employment included a stint as Vice-President of an economic consulting group in Westfield, N.J. This company was retained by major food manufacturers and retailers, The President’s Council of Economic Advisors, and the Congressional Budget Office in Washington D.C.

From there Myers became Vice President of Commodity Procurement for Swift and Company in Chicago, Ill. After Swift was sold in 1983, he was an independent commodity trader on the Chicago Board of Trade and Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

While still working as a commodity trader, Myers purchased a cow/calf operation near Pueblo, Colo. The operation expanded into a feedlot operation in Rocky Ford, which he continued to operate until his retirement in 2004. Since then, Myers has been an instructor in the Agricultural Business Management program at Otero Junior College.

Myers continues to leave a mark on everyone he touches. “Working with Mack (Dr. Myers) has been and will continue to be an excellent learning opportunity for myself as well as the students. I never leave a conversation with him without learning something new about agriculture. His love for agriculture, economics and students is amazing,” said Becky Gremillion, also a faculty member at OJC in the Agricultural Business Management program.

“This is a great tribute to a man who has dedicated his life to promoting Agriculture both in and out of the classroom,”

Otero Junior College President
Jim Rizzuto.

Dr. Myers was honored on Friday, March 4 during a reception, dinner and ceremony held at the Lory Student Center Theater Ballroom on the CSU campus.
OJC Employees of the Year

Otero Junior College is proud to announce the faculty and staff members who have been named Employees of the Year. Three categories of employees are recognized each year at OJC for their outstanding service and dedication to the college. Those categories are: faculty, classified and administrator/pro-tech. This year, a new category was added to honor the adjunct faculty member of the year.

**Faculty of the Year:**

Kimi Kelley has taught literature courses, English composition and developmental education in the areas of reading and writing at OJC for four years.

Kelley’s work ethic goes above and beyond. She is dedicated to the Writing Lab and providing writing tutors for all students needing help with writing assignments for any course. Her students find her inspiring and knowledgeable.

Kelly displays great energy and passion for teaching. A bad experience in high school caused Kelley to hate school. By earning a BA in English and Education and an MA in creative writing, Kelley proved that failures in K-12 education can be overcome.

Her goal is to engage students in order to make education valuable, real and accessible to all.

**Classified Employee of the Year:**

Janet Golden took on the role of administrative assistant in the Physical Plant at OJC one year ago.

“Janet has done an exceptional job at filling her role,” said John Canaday, director of Physical Plant. “She handles requests that come in and gets information to the crew efficiently. Janet has helped clean up the motor pool and gets people vehicles when they need them.”

Since she began, Golden has taken on extra duties including receiving packages, tracking purchases and organizing deliveries of packages to staff. She has also helped the crew with setting up computer documents, counting inventory and finding parts that need to be ordered.

**Administrator/Pro-Tech of the Year:**

Marlene Boettcher has served OJC as director of Human Resources for 26 years. She understands the rules and laws governing colleges and has helped to ensure that OJC works within them.

Boettcher advocates for employees. She is well-respected and people know they can go to her for help in problem-solving, with personnel issues, or just to talk.

Boettcher’s position requires tough decisions, always with the best interests of the college in mind. Coworkers describe her as cheerful, dedicated and a consummate professional.

Boettcher retired from OJC in December.

**Adjunct Faculty of the Year:**

M.J. Romano, a pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of La Junta, Romano has taught philosophy and ethics at OJC for five years.

Romano provides clear, concise instruction. Knowledgeable in her areas of instruction, Romano uses examples in her courses that students relate to. Both courses she teaches demand critical thinking, which Romano promotes and encourages.

Romano described a situation in which a student in a class was struggling with a family crisis. The student’s final essay helped promote processing of the tragedy and understanding that the family had the resources within themselves to carry them through.

Romano hopes to continue to grow in her own understanding of the history of ideas and pass on that learning to her students.

In addition to being honored at OJC, each honoree was recognized at an awards ceremony this spring, hosted by the Colorado Community College System in Denver.
In 1939, the residents of the La Junta School District Number 11 voted that bonds be used to partially finance a junior college building to be administered by the Board of Education. On September 15, 1941, "La Junta Junior College" opened its doors to the first class. The college was operated by the school district. By state statute, the college was classified as a continuation school.

In 1949 an election was held on a county-wide basis to consider the proposal that the college become an independent unit supported by the county rather than by the local school district. This proposal was approved by the voters and the college was renamed, "Otero County Junior College."

The elected board, the Junior College Committee, did not desire to assume control of the college then, and it continued to operate as a continuation school.

On January 1, 1956, the college governing board voted to take over the existing facilities from the La Junta School District, and the college changed its name to "Otero Junior College." The college became primarily a transfer institution emphasizing the first two years of a four-year degree program.

This fall, OJC will kick off the 75th anniversary celebration with a Homecoming Reunion September 3 & 4. Activities will include athletic events highlighting Rattler Volleyball, Men’s and Women’s Soccer, Softball and Baseball; a barbeque dinner; and an outdoor dance. Tours of campus and smaller reunion events will be happening throughout the weekend as well.

The majority of events will have no charge. Registration is available online to reserve your spot at the reunion; to pay for the barbeque dinner which will be $10 per person; and to order a commemorative t-shirt. T-shirts will be white and will feature the Otero Junior College 75th Anniversary logo.

Registration can also be completed by contacting Sue Samaniego, director of communications and public relations, at 719-384-6821 or susan.samaniego@ojc.edu . Samaniego is also happy to help organize mini-reunions during the even for specific groups upon request (e.g. dorm residents during a specific year, sports teams from a specific era, etc.)
OJC implements worksite wellness program

Otero Junior College kicked off its worksite wellness program with the start of 2016. At the all staff meeting on Jan. 7, the wellness team introduced the first ingredient of the program: Become a Fitness Champion.

Employees are allowed two 10-15 minute walking breaks during the workday in addition to their regular breaks. The goal is to get employees who sit at desks for long periods of time during their work day up and moving to counter the negative health effects of sitting.

Research has linked sitting for long periods of time with a number of health concerns, including obesity and metabolic syndrome—a group of conditions including increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist and abnormal cholesterol levels. In addition, sitting for long periods appears to increase the risk of death from cardiovascular disease and cancer.

“The negative effects of excessive sitting are not countered by workouts before or after work hours are over,” said Kurt Long, OJC Fitness Center director and chair of the wellness team. “We need to be moving periodically throughout the day.”

Employees check in at the fitness center during their walks to sign in. Each sign-in becomes an entry in the monthly Fitness Champion prize drawing. Prizes will include health-related items.

“I am in total support of this program,” said OJC President Jim Rizzuto. “All too often we get caught up in our day to day work routine and don’t take enough time to care for ourselves physically and mentally. I thank Kurt Long and his committee for bringing forth this innovative program and encourage all on campus to join me in being a part of the worksite wellness program here at Otero Junior College.

The Fitness Champion walking program was chosen as the first step because it was easy to implement. It also addressed two of the top three health concerns reported by employees in a survey at the start of the academic year: need for physical activity and stress management. The third concern was ergonomics, facilitating proper body mechanics during work tasks to decrease risk of injury due to overuse of muscles, poor posture and repeated tasks. This will be addressed on an individual or departmental basis.

Rick Ritter, Otero County Public Health director, facilitated the first meeting of the wellness team and continues to provide support. Health Links has also served as a primary resource for the team. Health Links™, a nonprofit initiative spearheaded by health and safety experts at the Center for Health, Work and Environment within the Colorado School of Public Health, has a mission to simplify how worksite health and safety get done, helping build healthy, vibrant businesses and a stronger local economy. Find out more at https://www.healthlinkscolorado.org/about/our-story. Southeast Health Group loaned their Weigh and Win kiosk to OJC for several weeks to allow employees to benefit from that program as well.

The proposed mission of the OJC wellness team is to provide opportunities for employees to develop healthier lifestyles by supporting the adoption of habits and attitudes that contribute to positive well-being. The committee meets monthly to plan activities and programs to support workplace wellness.

**Congratulations to January and February Fitness Champions:**

Kim Grimsley and Lavona Tyscka
New staff

Otero Junior College is proud to announce the addition of new staff members.

Donna Eddy of La Junta has joined the Instruction team as the Coordinator of Instructional Services. She assists with production of semester schedules, organizes faculty evaluations, ensures classroom readiness for instruction, purchases equipment and supplies and provides administrative support to the Instructional Services office.

Eddy received her bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in management from Adam’s State. Prior to coming to OJC, Eddy worked as an administrative assistant at Winter Livestock. Outside of work, Eddy enjoys spending time with her family.

“OJC is a great place to work and it is a great opportunity for me and my family,” said Eddy. “I hope to be a part of OJC for a long time.”

Jeremy Yoder joins the TRiO team as a Career and Financial Advisor. His duties include helping TRiO students with making sound career and financial decisions regarding their education. In addition, he provides support to help students successfully complete at OJC and transition to a job or to another school to complete their education.

A La Junta transplant via Baltimore, Md., Evanston, Ill., and Berlin, Germany, Yoder received his bachelor’s degree in English from Goshen College and a master’s degree in divinity from Eastern Mennonite Seminary. He continues to work part time at Emmanuel Mennonite Church.

Yoder is married with two young girls. When he is not working, Yoder enjoys reading and podcasting.

OJC student gains career experience through Girls in the Middle

Otero Junior College student Carly McCormack has always been interested in the arts. As an art student of Mr. Max Cordova at Swink High School, McCormack received several awards for her art throughout her high school years, including best senior portfolio in the 2014 Otero Arts Festival. For this achievement, McCormack earned a scholarship to OJC where she is now studying arts and graphic design.

“I was really excited to be asked to design and paint the Girls in the Middle logo and mural this year. I always like doing projects for people; especially when there are clear instructions on what is needed,” said McCormack. “It was also fun to work with a committee.”

While McCormack says she gets many requests to design tattoos, this request took her to an entirely different level. “This directly related to my chosen field of graphic design,” explained McCormack. “There are not a lot of chances to design and paint something that big either, so I really enjoyed it. I hope to get to do it again.”

McCormack thanks Arts faculty member Steve Kalaher and fellow student Jenna West for their assistance in the painting process. Members of the Girls in the Middle committee were complimentary of McCormack’s work and stated that many of the girls who attended the conference took time to get their picture taken with the mural.

Mc Cormack plans to graduate from OJC in another semester or two, and will then transfer on to a four-year institution for continued studies in graphic design.
Otero Junior College graduates its first class of Medical Laboratory Technicians this semester. The class will be celebrating with a pinning ceremony on Nov. 30 at 5:00 p.m. in the Life Science Building, room 107 on the OJC campus.

Graduates are Zane Graham, Brandon Landgren, Manley Presser and Destiny Ross. The MLT program has achieved Serious Status with the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratories and these students will be eligible to take their American Society of Clinical Pathologists Board Exams upon graduation.

The OJC Medical Laboratory Technician program prepares individuals to perform routine medical laboratory procedures and tests and to apply preset strategies to record and analyze data. Students prepare for a career in Medical Laboratory Technology through online/hybrid formats, classroom laboratory practice, and supervised clinical experience. They complete classes in general education along with Hematology, Clinical Chemistry, Clinical Microbiology, Immunology /Immunohematology, Urinalysis, and Parasitology/Mycology.

The MLT program is designed for the student to graduate with an AAS degree in two years. Three semesters are spent at the OJC campus and two semesters are partially spent in clinical rotations at an affiliated clinical facility.

The development of the MLT program at OJC was a project supported by the TAACC/ CHEO grant funds.

Alumni,

Update your profile information through the OJC website at http://www.ojc.edu/alumni.aspx and keep your connection to OJC current. Otero Junior College is coming up on it's 75th anniversary during the 2016-2017 academic year. Be a part of the celebration! You are OJC! You are a Rattler!

For more information or to volunteer to help with any aspect of the celebration, contact Sue Samaniego, Director of Communications and Public Relations at (719) 384-6821 or susan.samaniego@ojc.edu.
OJC Law Enforcement Academy graduates class #36

To start each Otero Junior College Law Enforcement Training Academy graduation, graduates present roses to thank the people in their lives whose support allowed them to attend and complete the program. This tradition was especially meaningful this graduation, which was held the day before Thanksgiving.

Miner Blackford, OJC Law Academy director, welcomed guests and provided his own thanks to the families of the graduates. He explained that without the excellent work they did in raising and supporting the graduates, these students would not have what it took to succeed in the program.

OJC President Jim Rizzuto added his thanks to the families and instructors and wished the graduates the best and most successful of careers.

Guest speaker, Chief Todd Quick of the La Junta Police department, addressed the graduates with a speech emphasizing integrity, honesty, bravery and compassion.

“These are the makings of a hero and these cannot be taught,” said Quick. “Each day, you put on your uniform, but the uniform does not make the hero. The heart makes the hero.”

Quick ended with a poem by an unknown author called The Badge.

Student speaker Mitch Zgorzynski addressed his classmates just prior to the presentation of certificates. In his speech, Zgorzynski spoke of how good and bad experiences had bonded their brotherhood and how each had matured through the training program.

“We have a great responsibility to our communities and to our fellow officers. The public will expect us to be perfect,” said Zgorzynski. “While we know that that is not possible, our responsibility is to be as perfect as we can be. This should start in our homes. Integrity is doing thing when no one is watching. This means both on and off duty.”

Next, Blackford presented the certificates that allow graduates to sit for the POST exam. Students graduating with this class included: Gabe Beard, Lamar; Mike Bell, Ordway; Nathaniel Ekberg, Burlington; Juan Estrada-Garcia, Manzanola; J.D Haley, Pueblo; Joshua Katz, Fountain; Trevor Love, Ordway; Jaime Madrid, Lamar; Dwayne Skolski, Canon City; and Mitch Zgorzynski, La Junta.

Mitch Zgorzynski was recognized for excellence in law enforcement driving skills and firearms skills. Nathaniel Ekberg for excellence in arrest control skills.

Following the ceremony, family and guests enjoyed refreshments and photos.

Registration is open for the Spring 2016 academy session. For more information on the program, contact Miner Blackford at miner.blackford@ojc.edu or (719) 384-6867.

Graduates for fall 2015: Front row l to r: J.D Haley, Pueblo; Nathaniel Ekberg, Burlington; Trevor Love, Ordway; and Gabe Beard, Lamar. Back row l to r: Juan Estrada-Garcia, Manzanola; Jaime Madrid, Lamar; Dwayne Skolski, Canon City; Miner Blackford, OJC; Joshua Katz, Fountain; Mike Bell, Ordway; and Mitch Zgorzynski, La Junta.
Ft. Lyon resident finds his way back with fitness

To Eloy “Andy” Sandoval, running was a very successful venture since early in his life. In his freshman year of high school, Sandoval started running the 2 mile race and won many races.

When he entered the Marine Corps, he took the standard 3 mile run test that requires completion within 28 minutes. Sandoval finished in 16 minutes.

Not surprisingly, Sandoval was invited to join the U.S. Marine Corps Distance Running team. At the time, he was the fastest distance runner in the Marine Corps. He competed against other countries’ teams and raced in places such as Okinawa, Japan.

Running and fitness remained a driving force in Sandoval’s life until his wife filed for divorce in 1985. Broken-hearted, Sandoval turned to alcohol.

A drunk driving conviction resulted in a choice between three years in prison or two years of probation and substance abuse treatment at the Ft. Lyon Supportive Residential Community. It was this choice that brought Sandoval to Ft. Lyon fourteen months ago.

Working in the kitchen at the facility, Sandoval quickly gained 40 pounds. He was taking Narcotics for a back injury. Knee pain necessitated the use of a brace. Sandoval was a long way from the celebrated athlete of his past.

In the spring of 2014, Kurt Long, Otero Junior College Fitness Center director, began teaching a fitness class on-site at Ft. Lyon. Sandoval saw the chance the class offered and registered. A one-mile run served as the initial fitness test. Sandoval finished his first mile in years in 18 minutes.

Tapping into the mental resources he had developed as a runner and the support of Long and the staff at Ft. Lyon, Sandoval set his sights on “getting healthy.” As part of this goal setting, he set out to train for the Bolder Boulder, a 10K (6.2 mile) race held each May in Boulder.

On May 25, 2015, Sandoval met this goal, completing the race in 1:08:54. Out of 46,000 finishers, he came in at 20,478. For his age and gender, he placed 103rd.

Not only did he meet this goal, but core conditioning allowed him to stop taking any medications for his back pain. He no longer requires a knee brace and the ankle pain that once plagued him is gone.

“A major part of my recovery has been getting back into physical conditioning. I have also given my life over to the Lord,” said Sandoval.

“Going to Alcoholics Anonymous and being at Ft. Lyon and seeing how others are coping with their challenges helps me too.”

Long says that Sandoval’s journey is inspiring to others at the facility. “I say, ‘Geez, Andy, how are you doing that?’ and it motivates them to do more,” he explained.

Sandoval likes challenging others at Ft. Lyon to do more physically. His advice? “Go see the chickens.” (The chicken pen is a ¾ mile walk from the main building) “Walk. Go to the gym. Work out. Work on your health. Think about your diet,” advised Sandoval.

“I dodged a bullet by giving up drugs and alcohol. Most of my friends are dead,” said Sandoval. “I need to watch my thinking and not let it bring me back down.”

In the most recent one-mile fitness test, Sandoval ran his mile in 7:10. Not one to rest on his laurels, Sandoval has set a new goal; to break a six-minute mile. There is no doubt that he will give that goal all he has.

For Sandoval, running has always brought a feeling of belonging and success. Finding his way back to that feeling is helping him succeed in life again. “I see a brighter future for myself,” said Sandoval. “I have hope, love, faith and peace.”

Registration is now open for summer and fall semesters

Contact Student Services for assistance:

719-384-6831
TRiO: Graduate. Transfer. Succeed.

Etiquette Dinners

Not only is it important to earn an education; it’s just as important to have good manners in the workplace. To build these skills, the TRiO program offers it’s students a chance for “hands-on” learning.

In order to attend, students must be passing all of their classes at the time of the event, dress in business casual clothing and RSVP.

Here are the top 10 business etiquette rules by Hank Coleman:

Rule # 1 – Start On The Outside. On a properly set table, there will be a series of forks on the left side of your plate and spoons and knives on the right. The simple rule is to always work from the outside in. The cutlery farthest away from the plate is for the first course.

Rule # 2 – Build Bridges, Not Ramps. When placing knives, forks, and spoons down, place the entire utensil on the plate (bridge). Do not put it back on the table, and do not rest it half on and half off the plate (ramp). When finished, place the knife and fork together in the center of the plate slightly turned to the five o’clock position. This will let the server know you are done eating.

Rule # 3 – Cutting Your Food. Always use both knife and fork. Do not cut food up at the start and then use the fork only. Cut one edible piece of meat at a time.

Rule # 4 – Eating Soup. When eating soup, push the spoon away from you to the farthest edge of the soup bowl. Bring the spoon to your mouth and drink the soup from the edge of the spoon and not by putting the whole spoon in to your mouth. And, of course, do not slurp.

Rule # 5 – Napkins. The napkin should be unfolded and placed on your lap immediately upon sitting down at the table, folded in half once, and the open end of the fold facing away from you. It is never acceptable to tuck your napkin in to the front of your shirt. If you must leave the table before finishing, place your napkin on your seat. This tells the server that you plan to return.

Rule # 6 – Which Glass? Normally you will have two or more glasses at the table. Your glasses are on the right upper side of your plate with your water glass being placed at the tip of your knife and the other glass to the right of it.

Rule # 7 – Sitting. You should not sit until your host or hostess has done so. If there is no host, wait for the senior or oldest person at the table to sit first.

Rule # 8 – Starting To Eat. Do not pick up your fork and begin eating until the host, hostess, or senior person at the table begins. Do not start eating until everyone has been served even if your food is getting cold. If there are a large number of guests, the host may indicate that you may begin before everyone is served. If this is the case, then you should begin.

Rule # 9 – Spitting Food Out. If you take a mouthful of food which contains something you cannot swallow, you should remove the piece of food by which ever means it entered your mouth.

Rule # 10 – Bread and Butter. When bread or any other food is served from a common bowl, offer the bread basket to the person on your left and then begin passing the bowl around the table to the right.

When bread is served with the meal there will be a small side plate on the left hand side of the place setting. Bread should be torn with your fingers and not cut with a knife if offered in loaf form. Use the butter knife to transfer a sufficient portion of butter for your bread once and place it on the side of your side plate. Tear off and butter each bite of bread as you eat it, rather than buttering it all at once.

Other Great Etiquette Rules & Tips

- Do not salt your meal before you have tasted it.
- Do not discuss politics before you have tasted it.
- Some foods can be difficult to eat. Save yourself trouble and embarrassment by just not ordering those foods!!
- Don’t blow on hot food to cool it down, just let it cool down by itself.
- Don’t move or turn your plate after your meal has been served.
- Be sure to say thank you to your host before leaving and send a hand written thank you note the next day.
- Dress conservatively!

These business dinner etiquette tips may seem outdated, but be assured that people are always watching how you handle yourself. If you already have a job and are eating with your boss, minding business dinner etiquette will set you up for future success.

You never know when an opportunity to make a sale or land a new job will present itself. In today’s challenging job market, it is important to use as many tools as possible to stay competitive.
Fall TRiO Conference

In August, TRiO will host the second annual TRiO conference – a half day full of workshops to help students start their semester off right. The conference had a great turnout last year. Students enjoyed a continental breakfast while listening to our student panel, went to breakout sessions during the morning, and concluded with pizza and a keynote speaker at lunchtime. Workshops included study skills, time management, college 101, budgeting, and What’s Your Color personality.

This year, we hope to start the day off with doing some team building activities with Dennis Huff. Dennis is a regular on campus as he works with many of the athletic teams and the President’s Leadership Program to build trust, support and respect of individual differences. “It’s important that students get to know each other and this is a great way to introduce them to each other,” said Holly Lewis, TRiO Student Support Services director.

Who Owns the Ice House?

This year, the TRiO program began the 10 week “Who Owns the Ice House” entrepreneurship program. The story was written by Clifton Taulbert, who learned the lessons of an entrepreneurial mindset from his Uncle Cleve. Taulbert journeyed through life in the Mississippi Delta at the height of legal segregation, being recognized by Time magazine as “one of the nation’s most outstanding emerging entrepreneurs.”

Participants have heard from two local entrepreneurs: Shirley Ann of Shirley Ann Specialties and Terry Mills of TLM Construction. Students are learning the importance of having the right mindset because it empowers them to be mindful of their choices; choosing the life they want rather than accepting life as it is.

An entrepreneurial mindset challenges students to see problems as opportunities, helping them learn to solve problems for others as a viable path toward individual empowerment. Through the lessons of perseverance and determination, they learn to persist in the face of challenges, setbacks and self-doubt. Not only are these great skills for college students to learn, but even more importantly, they are lessons that will last a lifetime.

Interferometry, Anyone?

In mid-March, a large crane was on the Otero Junior College campus to remove an old air conditioning unit and replace it with a new one on top of Wheeler Hall. While the crane was available, it also placed two satellite dishes on the south roof of McDivitt Hall. The two satellites will be linked together to make a radio telescope with an equivalent diameter of 120 ft. The signals form the two dishes will be combined (interferometry) to get information from astronomical sources of radio wavelength energy such as the Sun, Jupiter and the supermassive black hole at the center of our galaxy, the Milky Way. According to Mark Korbitz, science faculty at OJC, “One of the great things about doing astronomy at these wavelengths is that you can do astronomy even on cloudy days, during the daytime, or when it is foggy or rainy.”
PLP attends weekend of leadership at CLA Summit

Otero Junior College’s President’s Leadership Program strives to develop the future leaders on a community, state, and national level. OJC PLP scholars attended the Colorado Leadership Alliance Summit January 30, hosted at CU-Denver.

The Colorado Leadership Alliance (CLA) works with leadership education programs at 13 Colorado universities to equip students with skills for civic engagement and career success and connect students to Denver leaders through its annual Summit. This is the fourth year that OJC has attended, once again as the only junior college in attendance.

Each year, PLP members learn from other leaders around Colorado, collaborate with students with other leadership styles and grow individually and as a team. The students will apply what was learned in future events and projects they are a part of, and will carry it with them long after they leave OJC.

Twenty-one members attended this year’s conference including first year members, Adriana Coniker, Kyrah Guerin, Savannah Bernal, Elin Ekdahl, Kelsey England, Chealsea Lewis, Isaac Aragon, Tapiwa Magate, Delaney Gaddis, Kassady Wright, Mary Sand, Lindsey Tatum, Evan Maecker, Thalya Dwyer, Devin Camacho, Chance Abert, Ryan Blasberg, June Martinez and Daniel Bustamante. Second year students who attended were Lacey Darnell and Chloe Nolan.

The summit connected members with leaders from around the state. One of the main events at CLA Summit is the Mentorship Walk, in which a group of students are paired with a community leader. While walking around the campus, students are able to discuss life goals with their mentor as well as ask questions.

This is a favorite activity of many students as it provides an opportunity to put their leadership training into perspective and open their eyes to where their leadership skills can take them in the future.

For more information on the President’s Leadership Program at OJC, contact Samme Ormiston, PLP director at 719-384-6850 or samme.ormiston@ojc.edu.

New PTK members inducted

The Delta Rho chapter of Phi Theta Kappa inducted 25 new members December 6: Rebecca Barrett, Nora Bootzin, Breanne Buchner, Devin Camacho, Kelsey England, Nolan Gillies, Kyrah Guerin, Bruce Hall, Ashley Jordan, Samantha Kouns, Christopher Lange, Samantha Leblanc, Paige Lindbloom, Evan Maecker, Thomas Martinez, Josephine Matlick, Chloe Nolan, Judith Palmer, Shelby Patterson, Charlene Pike, Becky Prieto, Chad Russell, Jacob Sandoval, Larabeth Vanek, and Destiny Yates.
Two students at Otero Junior College have been named to the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) All-Colorado Academic Team. Chloe Nolan and Larabeth Vanek were nominated for the All-Colorado Academic Team by the OJC local Chapter, based on their scholarship, leadership and community service. PTK is the international honor society of two-year colleges. Nolan and Vanek are among 25 community college students from across the state who were honored at a luncheon on March 9 at the Denver Athletic Club.

Chloe Nolan is from South Lake Tahoe, Calif. She is completing an Associate of Arts degree at OJC. After graduation, Nolan plans to transfer to a four-year institution to complete a bachelor’s degree in mass media and music. She would like to one day work in a recording studio. A talented musician, Nolan writes music, plays guitar and sings. While a student at OJC, Nolan has participated on the Rattler Women’s Soccer team; in Phi Theta Kappa, this year as secretary; and in the President’s Leadership Program. She hopes to continue in a leadership program at her four year school.

Larabeth Vanek, of Cortez, will complete an Associate of Science degree at OJC in April. After graduation she plans to transfer to Western State Colorado University to continue studies in cellular and molecular biology. Vanek’s ultimate career goal is micro research. While at OJC, Vanek has been active in the STEM club and Phi Theta Kappa. A lover of all things scientific, Vanek has participated in the Robotics Challenge and the Space Grant balloon project. She was also one of 8 community college students chosen to participate in NASA’s 2015 RockOn Workshop at Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia.

Both Nolan and Vanek have also been nominated to the PTK All-USA Community College Academic Team. All selections are based on nominations submitted by community college presidents. To be eligible, a student must post a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA and be eligible to graduate with an associates degree.

OJC’s Wheeler Library recently subscribed to EBSCO Discovery Service, which provides students with a fast, streamlined search using a single search box, helping them find and access the highest-quality content for the best-possible research experience. EBSCO Discovery Service searches through our multiple databases, saving students in time and effort by reducing repetitive searches through each database. This service is available at http://libguides.ojc.edu/library.

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The OJC STEM team has been busy this winter. STEM Sandbox activities have continued with exploring the Snowflake Structures, Learning to Solder and further studies into 3D Printing/Design. The April Sandbox activity will be Ozobots, a tiny little robot that teaches students programming, math and science.

Our STEM Outreach activities reached over 500 regional students in the month of January alone, and have included:

OJC STEM joined Oliver Manufacturing during the 2016 Manufacturing Days held at the end of January 2016. This was the 2nd year that OJC STEM partnered with SE Colorado Workforce Center, La Junta Economic Development and Otero County Economic Development to provide hands-on learning activity to over 280 area 7th grade students.

We hosted two different Hour of Code events. A Hour of Code event utilizes computer programming tutorials from the Code.org website, and is geared towards “students” from non-readers to senior citizens. The Rocky Ford Youth Club, grades K through 6, visited campus and programmed with us for an afternoon, as well as we traveled to Las Animas to program off-line with all 6th through 8th grade girls.

With summer quickly approaching, the STEM team is busy planning this summer’s STEM Camps. These fun hands-on workshops are for young scientists and engineers of all ages. Summer STEM Camp workshops are planned for the month of July: Seeds (K - 2nd grade) will be held July 12 - 14 with sessions planned for both morning and afternoon; Sprouts (3rd - 6th grade) will be held July 18 - 20; Scouts (7th - 12th grade) will be held July 18 - 21; Sparkfun (7th - 12th grade) will be held July 25 - 28 in the afternoon; and Wildlife Camp (3rd - 8th grade) will be held July 25 - 27.

Stop by the STEM Center in Wheeler 116 to find out about the latest activity. You can also follow us on facebook at https://www.facebook.com/OteroJuniorCollegeSTEM.
STEM Day

Approximately 110 sixth through twelfth graders from Las Animas, La Junta, Cheraw, Swink, Fowler, Rocky Ford and Crowley County schools took part in the Second Annual STEM Day at Otero Junior College on December 14.

The goals for this day of hands-on learning and exploration were to introduce students to STEM-related careers and opportunities, and encourage students to enroll in STEM-related courses and degree programs in middle and high school and college.

A talented group of OJC faculty volunteered their time and expertise to pass down their skills to the next generation of students. Workshops included going on a QR code treasure hunt, building with little BITS electronics kits, working in automotive engineering, learning to solder, discovering hydraulics, working with clay anatomy, learning the vitals of nursing and exploring the science of the senses.

A new addition to STEM day for this year was the Maker Space, where students had the opportunity to experience eight additional STEM-related activities.

The day proved educational and fun for students and faculty.

The STEM Day outreach project was made possible by two STEM grants from the U.S. Department of Education. These grants have also allowed the college to expand facilities, faculty and staff and degree programs in STEM areas at OJC.
Women’s Basketball


Men’s Basketball

Baseball

Front row: Miguel Gonzalez, Phillip Baros, Philip Archuleta, Evan Maecker, Colton Wardle, Jared Rodriguez, Marc Alva and Riley Grivette.
Third Row: James Sandberg, Josh Billingham, Luis Sonora, Jarran Arbach, Franco Munoz, Dustin Hayes, Grant Templin and Turner Kinkaid.

Softball

Front row: Genevieve Ujlaky, Mackenzie Brock, Sami Kouns, Jocelyn Hernandez and Mary Sand.
Middle Row: Nohea Raphael, Kelcey Taguchi, Samii Garcia, Kristin Traverson, Shelby Copely, Juliana Alvarado, Jordan Padilla, Aspen Atkins and Lindsay Haub.
OJC Ag scholar works with Worldwide Goat Project Nepal

People always talk about networking; how important it is to one’s future to connect with people. Otero Junior College Ag Sciences student and recipient of an OJC Foundation Ag Premier scholarship, Jordan Roggen, started making her connections at a very young age.

While showing dairy goats through the American Dairy Goat Association, Roggen met Dan Laney, a judge for the ADGA. Because he was one of her favorite judges, Roggen spent time talking with Laney and soon found that they had other common interests, one being Nepal.

As a young child, Roggen travelled to Nepal with her mother, who was completing a mission trip. Study of world population, food production and distribution, problems and opportunities concerning population and global food interdependence reignited her interest in Nepal and other developing countries.

One project in Global Interdependence required students to write a grant for a project in a developing country. Roggen wrote her project on Niger. The main idea of her proposal focused on the idea that, often, projects in other countries revolve around handing people technology or tools that they cannot continue to use once the project is over. What if a project took goat DNA to them and learned from their current practices as they learn from ours?

As it turns out, Laney was working on putting together just that sort of project: the Worldwide Goat Project Nepal. The mission of this proposed project is to establish a self-sustainable increase in the milk/meat production of native livestock in Nepal. The goal will be met through use of artificial insemination (AI) techniques, using semen from bucks in the USA, and by teaching current sound herd management practices to Nepalese farmers.

The overarching goal is to benefit the health of the general population of Nepal by increasing the amount of inexpensive and readily available protein for their daily consumption.

“The main point here is that it is not a one-way street,” said Roggen. “It will not be the U.S. pushing its livestock and methods on Nepal, but Nepal and the U.S working together as a joint project. We don’t want them to lose what they already have. Their goats are hardy and survive in harsh climates. Currently, Dan [Laney] is researching different breeds to determine which will produce the best hybrid vigor.”

One of the first steps will be to determine current practices. A survey form is in development to gather information from farms and ranches who may be potential partners. Laney will head to Nepal to complete some preliminary work this spring.

The group is working on forming a nonprofit to support the project. Currently the group has a Go Fund Me page, found at https://www.gofundme.com/s5hk28 .

Roggen plans to be involved with the project as much as she can, working around classes as she continues her education. After graduating from OJC in April with her associate’s degree in animal science, Roggen plans to continue her education at Colorado State University-Fort Collins.

Wherever her path takes her in the future, Roggen will surely use her connections to make a difference in the world.
Each session will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until individuals have successfully completed all tasks that have been scheduled for them on that day. The event provides an orientation for new students to Otero Junior College and to the many services available at the college, a campus tour and appointments to complete all their enrollment checklist items. Students can choose which date they would like to attend for their orientation. Students are only required to attend one orientation.

Included in each orientation session will be a welcome from the institution’s president, Mr. Jim Rizzuto, overview on the college experience that includes dormitory life, the dining hall, coupon booklets, clubs and organizations, programs of study and tips for college and academic success. All students will participate in OJC’s online orientation which consists of a series of information videos, links and quizzes. Optional campus tours will be available immediately following.

According to Debbie Phillips, coordinator of campus and community events, attending an orientation session will give students and their parents a jump start toward their future at OJC.

“Explore2Enroll is designed to give students an opportunity to complete the admissions checklist that is vital to any new student planning to attend in the Fall.” explains Phillips.

All students are asked to register online at www.ojc.edu; an Explore2Enroll slide will appear on the main page which will then prompt students to the summer orientation registration page.

Fall Semester at OJC begins on August 15. Registration is currently open for all programs. For more information call the Student Services Center at (719) 384-6831 to schedule an appointment with an academic advisor.

For Further Information Contact: Debbie Phillips, coordinator of campus and community events at 719-384-6863 or debbie.phillips@ojc.edu.
Around Campus

The 2016 edition of Chinook, *Matters of the Heart*, was released in March. Advisor Christina Stork and student editor Cheyenne Foeppel pose with a copy.

Students and community fans react to an intense moment during one of many home basketball games this spring.

The OJC Livestock Practicum course spent National Ag Day at Triple M Bar Ranch, learning about the sheep/lamb industry first hand.

Coach Bielski braves the heights...sort of...to hang this year’s Men’s Soccer Region IX Championship banner. Yes, he was as freaked out as he looks, but he eventually got the banner up there>
The Outreach Trailer is a combined effort between several departments on campus. Nursing and Allied Health along with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) departments will be using the trailer as outreach in the community.

The new Ag Sciences greenhouse is nearing completion.

Our new public art piece, “Stop in the Name of Love” by Janene DiRico-Cable has been installed by the southwest entrance to the new Life Science building expansion. It was chosen to symbolize the caring hands of the professionals working in the career fields taught inside: nurses, nurse aides, medical lab technicians, emergency medical service professionals and health navigators.
Community

The Sophomore traditional program nursing group donated 425 lbs. of food for the Student Nurses Association food drive.

In conjunction with the Tax Help Colorado program through the Denver-based Piton Foundation, students trained in tax return preparation provided free tax return filing services to families throughout the OJC service area on several Saturday mornings and one evening during February and March.

Cosmetology alumni Baillie Englebrecht and Twanna Brizendine, as well as others, pitched in to help out Cosmetology instructor Tammy Dorenkamp this semester while an instructor was on leave.

SNA adopted a fellow Nursing student’s family for Christmas following devastating news of a cancer diagnosis.

Thank you!

To all who have supported the OJC Foundation on Colorado Gives Day or any day! The Foundation received $6,520 for CGD!

Your generosity lifts us all higher!

The Lady Rattler Softball team tutors students after school in Rocky Ford.
The Otero Junior College Foundation will be hosting the “Celebrating Excellence in Health Gala,” its third annual health professional appreciation banquet on May 11 at 6 p.m. in the OJC Student Center Banquet Room.

This event is designed to honor those working in all health care practice areas. The event proceeds benefit OJC students pursuing careers in healthcare fields through the Kay Mahoney Memorial/Kaiser Permanente Healthcare Scholarships.

“Tickets are available for anyone who would like to attend; from community members to direct caregivers,” said Sue Samaniego, OJC Foundation director. “We all have a stake in developing our future healthcare providers and celebrating the work of those currently in the many fields under the healthcare umbrella. Our event gives an opportunity to do both.”

The evening will feature keynote speaker Dr. Ramon Del Castillo, professor of Chicano studies at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Dr. Del Castillo has 13 years of experience in mental health administration with the Mental Health Corporation of Denver. This included Centro de las Familias, which included institutionalizing Curanderismo, an indigenous holistic approach to healing, into the repertoire of services in the clinic.

Dr. Del Castillo is a published poet and columnist. He was won multiple awards for his writings as well as for his humanitarian, civil rights and community/economic development efforts. His presentation promises to be interesting, entertaining and informative.

Also included in the evening will be a full dinner, an auction, basket raffles and more. Previous auction items have included rounds of golf, a cabin rental, pool passes and gear, and cement planters. Similar items are expected for this year’s event.

There are three sponsorship levels for the event: Platinum ($750), which includes eight dinner tickets, 24 free basket chance tickets and a special gift; Gold ($500), which includes eight dinner tickets and 16 free basket chance tickets; and Silver ($250), which includes four dinner tickets and 8 free basket chance tickets. Sponsors will also have their names printed in the evening’s program and other printed materials.

“A new benefit this year for sponsors is the ability to highlight both an excellent employee and their organization during the event,” said Samaniego. “Because this is a celebration of excellence, sponsoring organizations will get to write a brief highlight of an employee and their organization, which will be shared by the evening’s emcees. We want to celebrate our partners and their impact on our communities.”

Tickets for the event are $25 and are available for pre-purchase only and must be purchased by May 4. No tickets will be sold at the door. To reserve a ticket, contact Sue Samaniego at 719-384-6821 or Becci Lease at 719-384-6898.

For more information on sponsorships, tickets or the OJC Foundation, contact Sue Samaniego at (719) 384-6821.
Roping in the New Year at the Fourth Annual OJC Ag Gala

The Fourth Annual OJC New Year’s Eve Ag Gala was sold out as residents and businesses ‘Roped In’ the New Year together. The attendees supported a good cause while enjoying an evening of fun. The 2015 event, sponsored by the OJC Foundation, raised just over $11,000 with all proceeds benefiting agriculture students at OJC by providing funds for scholarships.

The evening consisted of a beef brisket dinner, gourmet chocolates, a cash bar, dancing to the live band The Saddle Sores, and a live auction. The live auction was led by auctioneer Cody Downare, and featured items donated by local businesses and community members. Some of the items included a beef prep basket, a bourbon basket, a hand-crafted wooden Christmas tree, and Avalanche tickets. The auction alone raised $2660 toward the OJC agriculture scholarships.

The evening would not have been possible without the sponsors and support of the community.

The sponsors who made the evening possible were:

The Platinum Sponsors of $1000 or more; Lewis Trucking, Wallace Oil Company, and Howe Feeders.

The Silver Sponsors of $350 to $499; First National Bank of La Junta, Brett & Nancy Balenseifen/ Mosimann Saddlery, Pipeyard, Rehab Solutions, Best Bet Beeflot, North by Southeast Ranches, United Feedyard, Broce Well Service, and Sodexo.

The OJC Ag Sciences program faculty and the OJC Foundation would like to thank all who contributed to the success of this event.

Mark your calendar to attend the next Annual New Year’s Eve Ag Gala on Saturday, December 31, 2016 and help us celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Ag Gala, as well as the 75th Anniversary of OJC! Everything will be bigger and better!

For more information on the Gala, to become an ag scholarship donor, or if you or someone you know are interested in becoming a part of the next generation to feed the nation and would like to apply to be an Ag student, please contact Brooke Matthew at (719)384-6964. Don’t forget OJC Ag scholarships are due April 15, 2016.
Growing up in Lafayette, Donnie Bjorhus had never heard of La Junta when he was recruited to play baseball for Otero Junior College in 1987.

“I remember when we were driving down to OJC, we turned east in Pueblo and I thought, ‘where am I going?’ Then we hit town. There were trees and it was green. After I saw OJC, it didn’t take much to get me to stay,” said Bjorhus.

Jeff Latham, in his first year as head baseball coach at OJC, had an immediate impact on Bjorhus.

“On the first night in the dorms, Coach held a team meeting and went over the team rules. That first night a couple of players broke a team rule. When we got to practice the next day, he told us to leave our gear in our vehicles. He had marked out a 2 ½ mile course on Highway 350 and the team had to run out and back in 102 degree heat. It wasn’t that he was hard-nosed or mean, it’s just that what he said was how it was going to be.”

Latham created a winning atmosphere and demanded hard work. That hard work paid off with back to back Region IX championships in his first two years as head coach. These were the first two region championships for the Rattler baseball program.

“Those two teams were the most tight-knit groups of guys that I have ever been associated with. We did everything together, from eating meals to attending volleyball and basketball games,” said Bjorhus. “We had to make up things to do to keep busy and have fun. We had some semester-long whiffle ball tournaments behind the dorms that turned into bloodbaths,” he joked.

Bjorhus developed personally in his time at OJC. “Being at OJC as a student-athlete, I really had to learn how to manage my time to balance class time and studies with baseball practice and workouts. Being a member of a collegiate team also taught me about being accountable to others. Much of our success in baseball at OJC was a direct result of each guy on the team accepting his role on the team and being held accountable to put in the necessary work to make himself and the team better.”

In addition to the connection to his teammates, Bjorhus remembers how much he enjoyed the community connected with and supported the team. “As we began to win more and more games, interest from the community built. A booster club formed and the radio station came in to broadcast all of our games. Potter Park was a neat place to play baseball, too. It was an older ball field that had some atmosphere,” Bjorhus recalled.

When he graduated from OJC with an Associate of Arts in business, Bjorhus transferred to Metro State. He played baseball there for two years while earning a Bachelor’s degree in secondary physical education.

When his playing career ended, Bjorhus was hired as an assistant coach at Metro State where he stayed for three years. At that time, he moved to Wyoming, got married and earned Certified Golf Teaching Professional and PGA Golf Professional qualifications, Bjorhus is now the head golf professional at Thermopolis Golf Course where he has been for the past three years.

“I will always look back on my time at OJC fondly. Many of the friends that I made during my two years at OJC are the people that I stay in contact with today,” said Bjorhus.

OJC will be celebrating its 75th Anniversary in the 2016-2017 academic year. The celebration will include a homecoming weekend to be held September 3 and 4, 2016 during which OJC will welcome Bjorhus and teammates as well as many other alumni back to La Junta.
2013 Alum continues to grow on his OJC foundation

Growing up on a family farm in Fowler, Kurt Lieberknecht knew agriculture was always going to be a part of his life. After graduating from Fowler High School, Lieberknecht spent the 2011-2012 year as a Colorado FFA (previously known as “Future Farmers of America”) State Treasurer.

Lieberknecht came to Otero Junior College during the 2012-2013 academic year to pursue an Associate degree in soil and crop science and compete on the Rattler Golf team. While at OJC, Lieberknecht participated in the inaugural year of the President’s Leadership Program.

After completing the soil and crop sciences program in a single year, a path not recommended for many, Lieberknecht transferred to Colorado State University Fort Collins. OJC was crucial for Lieberknecht to pursue more secondary education by receiving the Otero Junior College USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Soil and Crop Science full support scholarship to Colorado State University. In May 2015, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree with majors in Soil and Crop Science and Agricultural Business.

Lieberknecht recommends OJC as part of the path to a four year degree. “The environment of Otero set me up for success at CSU and life. It was a fantastic place to start my secondary education. Otero developed the person I am today,” said Lieberknecht.

“Being close to home and having time to learn what I needed as a support system to be successful at CSU was helpful. If I had gone straight to CSU, I probably would not have made it through four years. OJC was a huge building block,” said Lieberknecht. “The atmosphere is fantastic…the staff, professors, students. The golf tournaments were fantastic, too,” he added.

As soon as he graduates from CSU, Lieberknecht plans to pursue his Master’s degree in Agronomy or Water Law.

Lieberknecht came to Otero Junior College during the 2012-2013 academic year to pursue an Associate degree in soil and crop science and compete on the Rattler Golf team. While at OJC, Lieberknecht participated in the inaugural year of the President’s Leadership Program.

Now working as a loan officer for Premier Farm Credit in Yuma, Colorado, Lieberknecht has plans to further his education in Agronomy or Water Law in the near future.

Asked to name individuals who had a significant impact on his life at OJC, Lieberknecht produced an impressive list. “Coach [Joe] McClain for sure. He kept me on track. He was a great coach and mentor. I really enjoy staying in contact with him. Then there’s Samme Ormiston, Justin Osborne, Jeff Paolucci, Jim Rizzuto, Robert & Sue Samaniego, Warren McClure, Dr. Joel Gray, Lisa Gallegos, Wayne Beadles, Mark Korbitz, Ginger Davidson, Gary Addington, Kurt Long, Almabeth Kaess, Cody Long, Ashley (Watkins) Crowder …ha! I’d have to name everybody,” he joked.

“Sorry, I know I didn’t mention everyone but all of the staff from the awesome tutors at the Student Success Center, to the amazing people like Casey Weaver and the facilities staff who keep the place looking and functioning great, to all of the professors that I had class with and others that I didn’t but supported me while at OJC… OJC felt like an extended family. It was a highlight of my 23 years on this earth,” Lieberknecht raved.

“It wasn’t only the people employed at OJC that had a very significant impact on my life, it was also a lot of my peers, classmates, teammates and group members. I made lifelong friends at Otero. I have to thank my awesome teammate, roommate and best friend, Taylor Schiffer. He kept me grounded. Also Braden Wilson and AJ Brown for making the trek up to Fort Collins with me and taking a leap of faith to join FarmHouse Fraternity. I can’t thank those two gentlemen enough,” said Lieberknecht.

Kurt Lieberknecht
OJC Foundation Colorado Opportunity Matching Challenge -
A chance to see your donation go twice as far

Otero Junior College Foundation, in conjunction with the Colorado Community College System Foundation, is eligible to receive $12,615 in matching funds through the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative. In 2014, the Governor and General Assembly created the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative with the goal of establishing a statewide network of scholarship programs.

To receive the COSI funds, OJC must match the amount with $12,615 in new or increased scholarship contributions.

The COSI matching grant enables an individual’s gift to go twice as far, helping twice as many deserving students. Approximately 18 new scholarships, for both degree and certificate seeking OJC students, will be created and each student will receive an award between $1,300 and $1,500.

COSI scholarships are intended for Colorado residents who have lower incomes, with preference given to minority and first-generation college students. The matching funds for this challenge must come from new donors, lapsed donors or increased donations from current donors.

The Scholarship Initiative will help ensure that students are not just given financial support to gain access to higher education degree and certificate programs, but they are also given the tools necessary to succeed and earn a postsecondary degree or certificate.

Scholarship awardees must engage in OJC’s rigorous TRiO student support success program including orientation, career and academic advising and financial aid advising.

This 1:1 match with state funds will be used to fund scholarships for tuition assistance which will cover the cost of tuition, books and fees. This scholarship is a last dollar in program so Pell and other federal and state supports will be applied first.

Amazon Smile - an easy way to support the OJC Foundation

Do you shop at Amazon.com? Do you do it through the www.smile.amazon.com site? If your first answer is yes and then second one is no, you are missing out on an opportunity to support a charitable organization with your purchase at no cost to you.

Logging in to www.smile.amazon.com uses the same user name and password as on the regular Amazon site. Prices and product selection are the same, too. The difference is that each user can choose an eligible charitable organization to receive .5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. The Otero Junior College Foundation can be your choice.

“I chose the Otero Junior College Foundation as my recipient and have made a few purchases. I was concerned that items I needed would not be eligible purchases, but so far only one item has not qualified,” said Sue Samaniego, OJC Foundation director. “What a simple way to make a difference doing something many of us already do!”

For more information on this program, visit www.smile.amazon.com.
ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Friday, April 8, 2016 ....................... Last Day to Withdraw from Classes Earning a “W”
Friday, April 29, 2016 .................... Last Day of the Semester
Saturday, April 30, 2016............... Graduation
Tuesday, May 3, 2016..................... Final Grade Reports Due
Monday, June 6, 2016 .................... Summer Classes Begin (8 and 10 Week Sessions)
Monday, June 13, 2016 .................. Last Day to Drop Classes & Receive a Refund (8 Week Class)
Wednesday, June 15, 2016 ............. Last Day to Drop Classes and Receive a Refund (10 Week Class)
Monday, July 4, 2016 ..................... Holiday Break
Wednesday, July 13, 2016 ............... Last Day to Withdraw from Classes earning a “W” (8 Week Class)
Monday, July 25, 2016 .................. Last Day to Withdraw from Classes earning a “W” (10 Week Class)
Friday, July 29, 2016 ............... Last Day of the Semester (8 Week Class)
Friday, August 5, 2016 ............... Last Day of the Semester (10 Week Class)
Tuesday, August 9, 2016 ............. Faculty and All-Staff Meeting
Saturday, August 13, 2016 .......... OJC Housing Opens
Sunday, August 14, 2016 ............. OJC Housing Opens & New Student Orientation
Monday, August 15, 2016 .......... Fall Classes Begin

Visit the complete OJC Campus Calendar where you can see all campus and community events.

Events, dates, times, locations and detailed information is available at: www.ojc.edu

“Like” Otero Junior College on Facebook

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