

Dr. Diana Lovell Named President of SWOSU

Dr. Diana “Diane” Lovell will become the 18th president of Southwestern Oklahoma State University on July 1, 2021.

Lovell has been serving as Vice-Chancellor of Student Services, Dean of Social Sciences and Professor of History at Blinn (TX) College District since 2012.

Lovell was born and raised in Weatherford within the shadow of SWOSU. Both her parents taught at SWOSU with her father serving as chair of the Biology Department and mother teaching in the Home Economics Department. Additional family members have deep connections to SWOSU.

She has a B.A. in Education from Baylor University in 1989, a M.A. in History from the University of Houston in 1992 and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Houston in 2003. In addition to being at Blinn College District, Lovell has served as Dean of the College of Arts & Humanities at Houston Baptist University. Lovell has two children—Josh and Elizabeth. She will follow SWOSU President Randy Beutler, who will retire on June 30.



SWOSU Physics Club Named Distinguished Chapter

Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Physics Club in Weatherford has been named a “Distinguished Chapter” by the national office of the Society of Physics Students (SPS). The SWOSU organization, a small but active group, was recently featured in the SPS Observer, a quarterly magazine of SPS.

In the fall of 2019, through support from the Oklahoma NASA Space Grant Consortium, the club started a rocketry project with the goal of competing in the Argonia Cup, a national collegiate rocketry competition held in Argonia (KS). Another ongoing project is the building of Dobsonian telescopes with parts collected from old, nonworking telescopes that have accumulated at the SWOSU Observatory. The club is using these parts to make simpler, more efficient telescopes that are more easily transported. Eventually, the club hopes to donate some of their student-built telescopes to area high schools.

Other research projects include using microcontroller-operated seismometers to monitor the recent increase in Oklahoma earthquakes and engaging in astrophotography and photometry, using the SWOSU Observatory to explore the universe from galaxies to supernovae.

SWOSU Sets Dates for Commencement Activities

Southwestern Oklahoma State University has announced the schedule for Commencement ceremonies for 2020 and 2021 graduates. All ceremonies—April 30 and May 1-2—will be held at the Pioneer Cellular Event Center and will also be live-streamed.

To comply with CDC guidelines and SWOSU regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic, guest seating will be limited to two guests per graduate. Bar-coded tickets for guests will be provided to graduates, and tickets will be scanned for admission. The tickets will be available through stubwire.com. Guests will be required to wear masks and observe social distance.

Additional commencement information can be found at: <https://bulldog.swosu.edu/commencement/index.php>



Explore “Return to College” Events Planned April 10 & 13

SWOSU will help Oklahomans who have successfully completed some college coursework, but have not yet finished a college degree, with a unique opportunity to submit college admission applications, receive advisement and financial aid counseling, and enroll in college classes on Saturday, April 10, and Tuesday, April 13, on the Weatherford campus.

Reach Higher: RECONNECT is a series of coordinated student recruitment events. SWOSU faculty and staff will be on site in the lobby of the General Thomas P. Stafford Center from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday (April 10) and 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday (April 13).

The primary goals of Reach Higher: RECONNECT Week are to increase awareness of the adult-friendly degree completion options available through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's Reach Higher initiative and encourage adults who have earned some college credit to successfully complete their degrees.

Dr. Howard Kurtz Wins Bernhardt Award

Dr. Howard Kurtz, professor of sociology and criminal justice, is the winner of the Bernhardt Academic Excellence Award for 2021 at SWOSU.

Kurtz was presented the prestigious award at the annual Bernhardt Award ceremony held virtually this year. He received a \$5,000 cash award, clock, pen and medallion.

SWOSU alumni Dr. William and Theta Juan Bernhardt of Midwest City are sponsors of the annual award that goes to an outstanding faculty member who exhibits exceptional achievement in teaching, scholarship and service.

Kurtz, a third-generation European immigrant, was born in Pennsylvania and worked his way through college as a musician. He received his doctorate in sociology and psychology from the University of North Texas and completed two post-doctoral studies at Rice University.



Forum for Racial Awareness and Social Change Held at SWOSU

SWOSU hosted two O.U.R. Conversation Workshops in late March and early April. The purpose of the workshops is to create a space for members of the SWOSU community to discuss race and racial matters logically and intelligently.

Natasha Tinsley, assistant professor in the SWOSU Language and Literature Department, said the two installations for this semester focused on the question: What is a racist? Both workshops were conducted through zoom.

SWOSU Digital Commons Surpasses Major Milestone

Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Digital Commons at <https://dc.swosu.edu/> recently surpassed a major milestone just as the digital repository celebrates its fifth anniversary.

The SWOSU Digital Commons is the university's institutional repository that retains scholarly and creative works by SWOSU faculty and students and serves as a repository for several collections related to the university, faculty scholarship, and the diverse peoples and cultures of western Oklahoma.

The entire collection of 22,994 items has had a total of 500,322 downloads in 213 countries as of early March. The collection opened March 7, 2016 and is open to anyone with Internet access.



SWOSU Student Wins Grand Prize at OK Research Day at the Capitol

SWOSU student Emily Bedea of Canute won the overall grand prize at the recent 26th annual Oklahoma Research Day at the Capitol. Bedea becomes SWOSU's third grand prize winner since the inception of the Oklahoma Research Day at the Capitol event. Her research topic was infectious disease and Bedea's faculty mentor is Dr. Vijay Somalinga, assistant professor in the SWOSU Department of Biological Sciences.

As a component of the event, students presented their work to an independent panel of judges on March 30 live via Zoom. The judges identified the top three students in each of two categories— (1) Regional, Community and Tribal Colleges (1st, 2nd, 3rd place) and (2) Research-Intensive Institutions (1st, 2nd, 3rd place). One overall Grand Prize Winner was also selected—which was Bedea from SWOSU. For winning the grand prize, Bedea won a \$500 award plus \$4,000 summer research internship.

