



We're Focused on Your Future!

Otero College
President's Report
February 2025
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Economic Mobility

As a part of CTE Month, on the afternoon of Thursday, February 20th. Otero's CTE Department hosted the 2nd Annual CTE Open House. Several younger students from Rocky Ford (10 miles from Otero College) were able to come and visit each of our CTE departments. Otero's faculty members had interactive lessons and gave tours and answered questions. The Open House encouraged not only the high school students, but also the current students, employees and the community to attend and learn about what the different groups are doing on campus. It really gave our CTE Faculty a chance to share their world with those who don't normally get to be a part of it. Otero's CTE programs provide pathways for individuals to gain the skills and knowledge needed to enter much needed, well-paying jobs. By showcasing the various CTE programs available, we offer prospective students and our community an opportunity to explore career options that lead to stable employment and upward mobility. Many CTE programs are tailored to industries with strong job growth, enabling graduates to quickly enter the workforce and begin earning a sustainable income.



Education for All

On Thursday, February 20th, Otero hosted our 2025 Discovery Day where nearly 100 high school aged students participated in a day of enriched experiences. Several area high schools brought students who had pre-registered to visit different academic departments on campus. They visited welding, cosmetology, agriculture, health professions, and construction. Each faculty member had an interactive presentation prepared for these students and helped give them an actual college experience.



Community members, high school students, and Otero students were all encouraged to attend Otero College's Financial Aid Night, an event designed to provide valuable information on funding opportunities for higher education. Attendees had the chance to learn about a wide range of financial aid options, including scholarships, the FAFSA, grants, loan options, and more. The event aimed to demystify the financial aid process, offering expert guidance on how to navigate the application steps and maximize available resources. By bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds, the event ensured that everyone, regardless of their current educational status, had the tools and knowledge needed to make higher education more affordable and accessible.

Empowered Talent

On February 19th, Otero announced its Employees of the Year. Each individual was recognized by the supervisor who nominated them.

Faculty of the Year is Becky Sporrer, one of our Agriculture Business Faculty members. Her hard work and dedication to the program contribute to its success. Her students value her and are eager to take more courses with her. She has additionally taken on more duties to help with fundraising and coordination.

Part-time instructor of the year is Darlene Blackford. She is one of the most extraordinary teachers at Otero College. Caring for students on a personal and academic level is an admirable, and, perhaps, expected trait in a teacher, but Darlene far exceeds normal expectations. She goes above and beyond to make her classes engaging, enjoyable, informative, and meaningful. Darlene has taught many professional development workshops. Other instructors have learned from her and have used the techniques she taught them in their classrooms to better engage the students. Darlene teaches many workshops throughout the year to educators outside of our community. She is creative and inventive. Above all, she is not only an exceptional teacher, but she is also teaching our future students to become exceptional teachers. Darlene's caring extends beyond Otero College. She serves the community by feeding the community in a monthly church event and volunteers her time with Clean Valley Recycling. Darlene Blackford is an invaluable member of our Otero community.

The Administrative Professional Technical Employee of the Year is Sherry Johnson. Sherry doesn't seek the spotlight; instead, she works tirelessly behind the scenes to create opportunities that foster a sense of belonging for our students at Otero. She goes above and beyond to empower the students on our work study team by encouraging them to explore and develop the skills they are most interested in. Sherry has even designed tailored task paths for work-study students based on their specific skill interests. She also creates monthly training videos to help these students build new soft skills, further preparing them for future success. She creates a slide show each semester for the work studies that have the training video, monthly recap of things the other work studies did, and information for them to get to know each other.

Classified Employee of the Year went to Jacob Liming. Jacob has been a member of the Security team at the college for over 12 years and is an exemplary employee. Challenges are part of the role of being on the Security Team and Jacob always responds to them in a positive, professional manner. The addition of new members and being/getting involved in the hiring and training of another employee is something Jacob has always embraced and accepted as part of his position in being a team member. Jacob continues to step up to the plate, not only putting in extra time as needed by his shift but also by being a big part of meetings toward changes that have been discussed within the department as well. As part of the hiring process, schedule changes and general reporting goes, Jacob's contributions have been extremely valuable in making

sure Otero College's Security Team remains on track in handling the demands of the position seven days a week. It is because of all these qualities, efforts and commitment that he was selected as Classified Employee of the Year.



Partner of Choice

The Otero College Humanities Center is back and better than ever! After a two-million-dollar makeover, we celebrated our grand re-opening on Feb. 3rd. With shiny new floors, lights, a fresh coat of paint, a revamped stage, comfy new seating in the Ed Stafford Theatre, and updated office spaces, every moment was worth the wait. The community was very excited to have the center back open as we hosted a local school play, a community concert, FBLA students and FFA students all just within the last month. We have held many practices for our internal college students as well. This theater is a well-used and greatly shared space!



This February, Otero College proudly celebrated the dedicated individuals working and learning in Career and Technical fields. These professionals play a vital role in shaping the world around us—whether it's building infrastructure from the ground up, providing comprehensive care from head to toe, or bringing food from farm to table. To honor their contributions, our marketing team highlighted several of our key programs, showcasing the diverse opportunities available to students. We also invited industry partners closely aligned with these fields to campus, fostering valuable connections and strengthening relationships that support both academic and professional growth. By engaging with these partners, Otero demonstrates its commitment to preparing students for success in the workforce, making the college a desirable and valuable partner for businesses seeking well-trained, industry-ready talent.

You can find links to our marketing ads here:

<https://www.facebook.com/61556388058922/videos/2653156584880079>

<https://www.facebook.com/61556388058922/videos/1369296857847035>

<https://www.facebook.com/61556388058922/videos/597486709928618>

Power of 13

Otero Student Life and Otero Basketball hosted an exciting Valentine's Day event at McDivitt Center Gymnasium. The Rattlers took on NJC at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., with a strong turnout of supporters. During halftime, Student Life organized engaging games, prizes, and other activities, ensuring an enjoyable experience for all attendees. The event successfully combined athletic competition with a festive atmosphere, highlighting the community spirit at Otero.

