

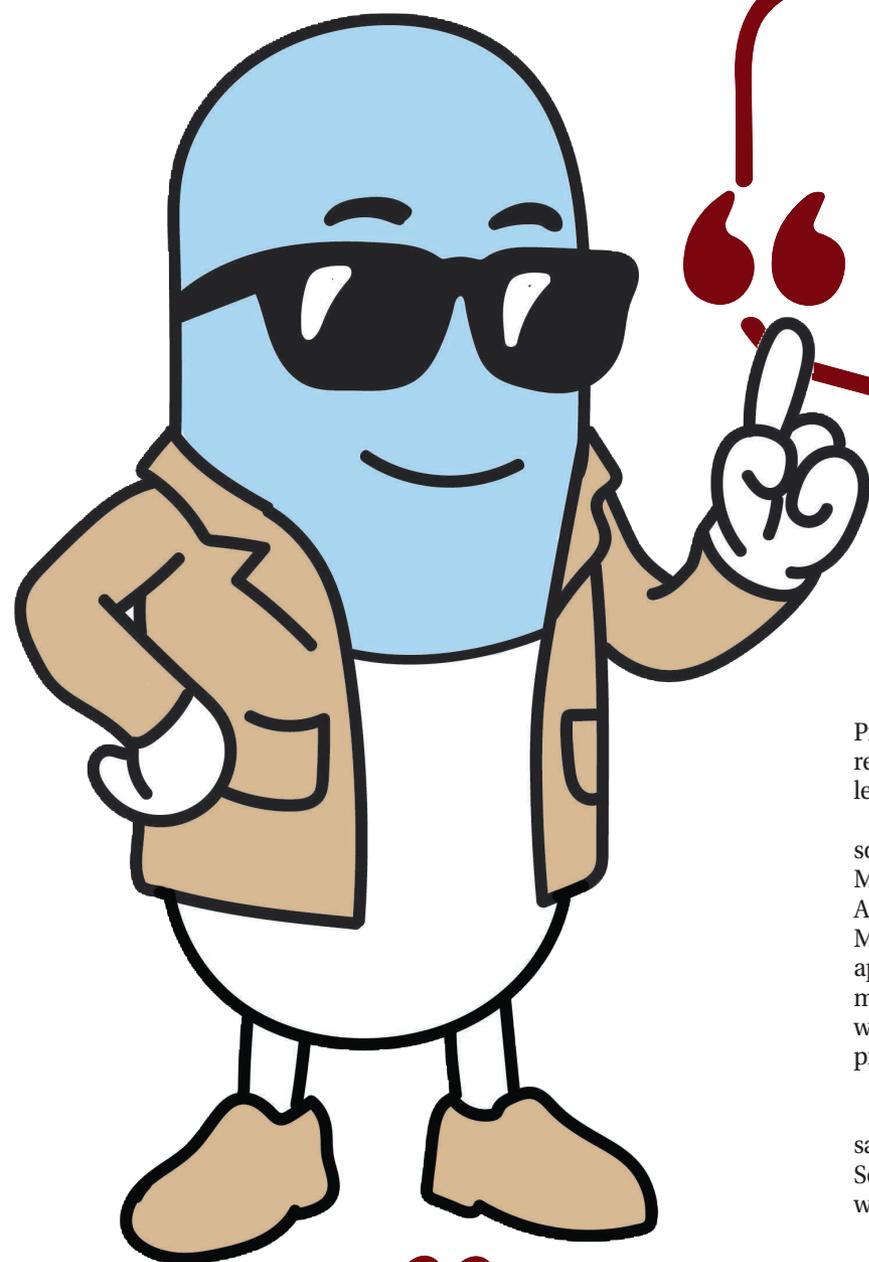
CAREER GUIDE

Equip yourself with resources for finding internships, jobs

Internship with the mayor:
OU student looks to make
impact in city | 6

Creative careers:
How College of Fine Arts
supports all paths | 10-11

Learning to teach:
Education students join
Norman classrooms | 12-13



I'm Professor Pill.

I'm here to help OU students navigate prescription drugs safely. This campaign is about education and empowerment.

A lot of prescription drug misuse on college campuses isn't about "bad decisions." It's about misinformation, convenience, or not realizing the risks.

Hello, Sooners.

Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Professor Pill, and yes, I am, in fact, a pill. But before you stop reading, thinking this is about a pop quiz or a lecture you didn't sign up for, hear me out.

Prescription medications can be a part of life for some students as they manage health conditions. Maybe you've been prescribed medication for ADHD, anxiety, pain after a surgery, or an illness. Maybe you've had leftover meds sitting in your apartment or dorm since freshman year. Or maybe you've heard a lot of mixed messages about what's "safe" and what's not when it comes to prescriptions.

That confusion is exactly why I exist.

I'm part of a new prescription drug safe use, safe storage and disposal campaign led by OU Southwest Prevention, designed specifically with students in mind. The goal isn't to scare you or lecture you, it's to give you clear, accurate information you can actually use. Think of me as your slightly sarcastic, fact-loving guide to prescription safety.

Here's what I focus on:

Safe use — taking medications exactly as prescribed and understanding risks.

Safe storage — keeping prescriptions secure and out of the wrong hands.

Safe disposal — knowing what to do with unused or expired medications.

leftovers "just in case," or doubling a dose because it didn't feel like it worked can all have serious consequences, even if the intention wasn't harmful.

But let me be very clear: **I'm not here to judge anyone who takes prescription medication.** Prescriptions can be incredibly helpful and necessary when used correctly. This campaign is about education and empowerment, not shame.

You'll mostly see me hanging out on social media, answering questions, breaking down myths, and sharing tips in ways that don't feel awkward or uncomfortable. We'll be posting short videos, myth-versus-fact content, resource spotlights, and reminders about events like National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

And here's the most important part: I want to hear from you.

If you have questions about prescription drugs, whether you think they're "basic," specific, or something you've always wondered but never asked — **you can DM me on social media @prof.pill. If you'd rather stay anonymous, there's a question submission link in our bio where you can ask anything without your name attached.**

Those questions help shape what I talk about next. Real questions from real students lead to real answers. No lectures, no judgment, no assumptions.

So welcome to the conversation, OU. Follow along, ask questions, and remember:

Think Twice.

I want to hear from you. No lectures, no judgment, no assumptions.



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A lot of prescription drug misuse on college campuses isn't about "bad decisions." It's about misinformation, convenience, or not realizing the risks. Sharing meds with a friend, saving



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FROM THE EDITOR



FILE/OU DAILY

OU offers a number of career resources for students ranging from college-specific programs and events to the Career Center.

'A peek into our future'

Dear readers,
 Thank you for picking up *OU Daily's* Career Guide.

Within this publication, you'll find stories from OU students across various colleges about internship opportunities and career aspirations. You'll read about university-sponsored opportunities placing students with leaders at the state Capitol in Oklahoma City, local internships through the arts and city government and various opportunities across the nation. You'll also read about challenges students are facing when it comes to job opportunities and how they navigate those challenges.

Over the last three years, I have spent countless hours in the *OU Daily* newsroom, learning hands-on what a career in journalism looks like. My involvement has not only helped me cultivate my skills as a journalist and a leader, but it has helped me learn what it looks like to have a career in this field. I've had the unique experience of covering nearly every area of Norman and OU, setting me up for success in my own

internships. I spent last summer in the *OU Daily* newsroom, helping to lead a small group of reporters and covering Norman and university. In leading the news desk over the summer, I learned the ins and outs of news management and started my role in the fall confident in my ability to lead and report on a larger scale.

Being part of an organization that supports my personal goals as a student and as a journalist has opened my eyes to the endless opportunities OU students are engaged in. I hope the stories found in this issue will help you discover some of the ways you can enter the workforce during your time at OU. Internships offer a first look into what our careers will be, giving us a peek into our future and allowing us to learn from seasoned professionals. Skills learned during internships are incredibly impactful to a student's career path.

At the back of this issue, you'll find sponsored content from OU's Career Center, the organization responsible for the job and internship fairs held



Natalie Armour
 News managing editor
nataliedarmour@ou.edu

throughout the school year. The center is a fantastic resource for career planning and preparing for life after graduation. I encourage every student to take advantage of these free resources, available at the office located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union.

Best of luck in all your career-building endeavors,
 Natalie Armour



LEARNING TO LEAD

Students share how the JCPenney Leadership Program connected them with professional opportunities



ESTHER HODSON/OU DAILY

Vicky Chen is a finance and economics junior who is pursuing an accelerated master's in finance.

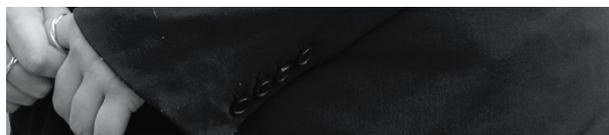


PHOTO PROVIDED

Kennedy Corbin, executive chair of Campus Activities Council, is an entrepreneurship and business management senior.



ESTHER HODSON/OU DAILY

Rowan Reynolds is an accounting junior serving as a peer trainer in the JCPenney Leadership Program.

BY REAGAN ROZZI • REAGAN.M.ROZZI-1@OU.EDU

The OUJCPenney Leadership Program is a student organization that provides opportunities for students in the Michael F. Price College of Business.

The program is reserved for undergraduate Price college majors. It teaches students leadership skills — such as resume formats, interview etiquette, personal confidence and social networking — to prepare them for life after college, according to members of the program and the program's website.

Members of the program told OU Daily it has helped them in a variety of ways as they enter the professional world.

'Out of my shell'

Vicky Chen, a finance and economics junior pursuing an accelerated master's in finance, is in her second year of the program.

Last summer, Chen worked at Citizens Bank of Edmond,

"I have definitely grown. ... I'm more comfortable with leading, and I feel more confident in myself."

**VICKY CHEN,
FINANCE AND ECONOMICS JUNIOR**

where she interned in multiple departments. She acquired the internship through the program's "C Suite for a Day" initiative, where members of the organization are sent to shadow company executives.

"I was able to shadow the CEO for the day," Chen said. "Afterwards, I reached out and asked if there were any internship opportunities that they had, and I was able to get my summer 2025 internship through the program."

Chen started her internship in the bank's human relations

department, where she spent a month sorting through new hires' resumes, reviewing applications and organizing interviews.

During her second month, Chen moved to the finance department, where she said her tasks varied significantly day-to-day.

"Whenever I worked at the finance department, I was tasked with different projects," Chen said. "Some days I was making dashboards. Some days I was doing various analyses. Some days I was looking at budgets."

Chen said she worked a standard 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. job structure. Because of her time spent interning, she said she now feels more comfortable working with business professionals and fellow students.

"A big part that we focus on is obviously being a leader, giving yourself that confidence so that you're able to stand

out and lead in front of others,” Chen said. “I have definitely grown. ... I’m more comfortable with leading, and I feel more confident in myself.”

Chen said the program has also helped her become more sociable in both business and personal settings.

“I’ve met so many great people through the program and it’s helped (me) come out of my shell,” Chen said.

From aviation to business

Kennedy Corbin, an entrepreneurship and business management senior, joined the program last fall. Corbin said she was familiar with the organization from her undergraduate courses but learned more about the program after switching her major from aviation to business.

“I had known a couple people in the program who had highly suggested making that transition,” Corbin said.

Corbin said Boeing, one of the program’s corporate sponsors, gave students an internship opportunity in the company’s finance department. She said taking an office job helped fine-tune her career goals after changing majors.

After her switch from aviation to a business degree, Corbin

“The program really helped me in terms of networking.”

**KENNEDY CORBIN,
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SENIOR**

was unsure about her future career. She then spoke to Brea Clark, the JCPenney Leadership Program director, about a potential internship, during which she was able to schedule a follow-up meeting with Boeing recruitment.

“Brea had helped me get an interview as well as (a) one-on-one with the recruitment person,” Corbin said.

Corbin’s internship involved meetings with the company’s various departments to review and ensure deadlines, fulfill contract terms and create funding reports.

“I was on the finance contracts team for Boeing with the bombers department. ...” Corbin said. “My day-to-day typically looked like helping out with contract compliance that the company had with clients.”

Corbin said the company worked with her to fit her personal interests. Since she had an interest in consulting projects, she said she was tasked to lead an internal consulting project with the company’s funding process.

With a blended schedule of remote and office work, Corbin commuted to Boeing’s Norman office every Tuesday through Thursday, with Monday and Friday alternating between at-home and in-person work.

Corbin credits many of her professional skills to the traits she learned through the program.

“The program really helped me in terms of networking,” Corbin said. “In a professional sense, being able to talk about what skills I could help offer without sounding arrogant, but then also, too, being able to approach people.”

‘People from all different walks of life’

Rowan Reynolds, a pre-law accounting junior, joined the JCPenney Leadership Program during her sophomore year after applying on a whim. She is now a part of the leadership team and serves as a peer trainer for students in the organization.

“Building relationships with those kind of people, like-minded people, has been so awesome and built a community that I just would have never had before,” Reynolds said.

Reynolds said Clark regularly shares internship opportunities throughout the school year. One opportunity, which allowed students to work alongside Rep. Stephanie Bice (R-Okla.), stood out to Reynolds.

After applying, and with a reference letter from Clark, Reynolds was accepted for the internship.

Reynolds’ job focused on general workplace tasks, answering and logging calls that came through Bice’s office, and planning events. She said the internship lasted throughout the 2025 spring semester.

“My job was just trying to be the first point of reference for all of her constituents. ... A new administration was coming in, with (President Donald) Trump coming into office and so there was a lot of concerns for the first few months and my job was to kind of diffuse anything,” Reynolds said.

“Much of business is really refining how you talk to people.”

**ROWAN REYNOLDS,
PRE-LAW ACCOUNTING JUNIOR**

Reynolds worked about 15 hours per week, commuting to Oklahoma City for three five-hour shifts, and was able to create a schedule that worked around her classes.

Reynolds said she feels that she worked more efficiently in Bice’s office because of her polished confidence and people skills developed through the program.

“Much of business is just really refining how you talk to people and being in JCPenney, there was so many networking opportunities that first semester and different opportunities to meet people from different majors. ...” Reynolds said. “I got really good at networking. ... with people from all different walks of life and that translated really well.”



The Price Career Center offers help with professional development planning, resumes, interview preparation and internship and job searches.

ANNIE DAVENPORT/OU DAILY



INTERNSHIP WITH THE MAYOR

OU student spends semesters getting hands-on experience at city hall

JAMEE KALISIK/OU DAILY

Anna Hyslop is a double major in economics and global energy, environment and resources.

BY KEATON SHAFFER • KEATON.J.SHAFER-1@OU.EDU

Since July, Anna Hyslop has been answering emails from an office at Norman's city hall. Oftentimes, when she's done, she looks up, sits back in her chair and chats with Mayor Stephen Tyler Holman.

Sometimes the two discuss local issues, other times national ones, but it's always friendly. It's usually about what they can do, and it has been Hyslop's favorite part of her time in city hall.

Hyslop is one of two OU students interning with Holman during the 2025-26 school year, an experience both of them find eye-opening and has had a larger, practical impact on the city of Norman.

Hyslop reached out to Holman in May to get involved in city government.

"I also believed in his vision," Hyslop said. "I still believe in his vision for Norman, and hopefully, by doing some of that administrative work for him, ... he'd be able to have more time to work in the community and meet people face-to-face."

Hyslop — a senior double majoring in economics and global energy, environment and resources — said she has known Holman since her first year, when she became interested in local government.

"I had been exposed to some climate media through podcasts, articles in The New York Times about the crisis, and I want to do something at the local level," Hyslop said. "That's when I met Mayor Holman, and ultimately we formed a working relationship."

Hyslop interned at the U.S. Department of Energy and White House Council of Economic Advisers in 2024, but she said her current internship is her first time working in local government.

"I realized that not a whole lot gets done in some of those spaces at the federal level, and the implementation work is pushed onto local governments," Hyslop said, "which again, compelled me to reach out to Holman."

Hyslop is also the founder of Students for Local Action, the first student-led interest group and think tank dedicated to climate action at OU, according to its website, which hosted Holman at an open forum on campus in September.

Holman, who won the mayoral election in February, said he thought help from Hyslop and the other city intern, Daniel

Zavala Paramo, would benefit him in his new position.

"I figured it would be a good idea — being a new mayor and going from being a council member, just representing a council ward, to representing the whole city — having a couple students to help out with communication and scheduling and sometimes filling in for me," Holman said.

Holman said one of the most helpful things about working with Hyslop and Paramo is their perspectives.

"They didn't grow up in Norman, and they both chose to come to Norman because of OU, ..." Holman said. "Being able to bounce some stuff off of them, or ask if they have any ideas or opinions about stuff, I've found to be really helpful."

Holman said regular communication with Hyslop and Paramo while they operate on campus and with different organizations has allowed him to stay better connected to OU.

Holman mentioned he brought Hyslop to Coffee with the Mayor in July, where they discussed initiatives benefiting students with Norman Chamber of Commerce staff.

"Getting to share my perspective and feel like people were actually listening to what I was saying was incredibly valuable to me as an interested stakeholder in the Norman community," Hyslop said.

Hyslop said she has been able to better understand the opposition to the University North Park tax increment financing, or TIF, district.

The Rock Creek Entertainment District Project Plan will include a new arena as well as additional housing, retail and office spaces in the University North Park area.

"It's been real helpful, not just for me, not just for city staff, but (the) business community as well, and hopefully constituents, ..." Holman said. "One of our goals is to improve communication between government officials and the public."

In September, Hyslop attended a U.S. Conference of Mayors reception with Holman, where they met with Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt and other mayors from around the country.

"I'm never in a position to meet those kinds of people, and it was really interesting to see how some of the challenges that Norman's facing ... are also being experienced by people in other places," Hyslop said.

Hyslop said she enjoyed talking to people with similar

experiences in different parts of the country.

"That's the benefit part of it, getting an opportunity like that to meet some people in the political field (and) local government," Holman said, "getting to come to city hall a couple days a week and be around city staff people or attend meetings or go to events or functions with me."

Holman explained there wasn't a formal structure for city internships before Hyslop and Paramo, but it may be something the city will expand if there's student interest. Holman also said other city departments may find interns helpful.

"It's pretty informal. They don't have a set schedule. I'm pretty flexible with their class schedule, ..." Holman said. "They have been vetted and have access to a city email so they can do that function from anywhere, really."

Hyslop said her experience in municipal government so far has confirmed her expectation that much of the policy implementation that affects Oklahomans is done at the local level. She said she has found the environment of local government more conducive to progress.

"There's definitely a different culture between the D.C. federal bureaucracy and local government in Oklahoma, and I personally prefer the more camaraderie-focused, the community environment that Norman's government has, when compared to, for the lack of better term, more competitive feel of working in some of those federal spaces," Hyslop said.

Hyslop said Holman deeply cares about those around him. After graduation, Hyslop said she may pursue law school and plans to continue pursuing local climate solutions.

"I've been in these spaces where people seem more concerned about power or money, ..." Hyslop said. "Stephen, though, is a true public servant, so getting to talk to him, and in a very friendly way, ... that just goes to show how strong the leadership of the city council in Norman is right now."

Holman said being able to see the communication, events, meetings and interactions with city staff firsthand is valuable.

"For any students that are interested in pursuing a career in government, administration or politically, either one, I think it's valuable to see how you kind of get immersed and get exposed to that world," Holman said.



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‘JUST SPEAK UP’

Former OU international students offer advice on finding opportunities, navigating job stress

BY ABBY YOUNG • ABIGAIL.F.YOUNG-1@OU.EDU

Every year, students from other countries come to the U.S. to attend OU. As of fall 2025, over 2,000 international students from 136 countries attended OU, according to the university’s international admissions website.

Three international students who graduated from OU last year shared their struggles navigating the U.S. job market and finding employment.

Finding a place

Vitoria Correia, a ballet dancer from Sao Paulo, Brazil, graduated from OU in May with a bachelor’s in ballet pedagogy. Correia now lives in New York, where she works as a freelance dance teacher and a resident life assistant at the School of American Ballet. She performed in the Brooklyn Ballet’s production of “The Nutcracker” in December.

Correia has been dancing since she was 7 and said her time at OU made her realize she loved teaching ballet. She said she hopes to stay in the U.S., where there are more job opportunities for dance.

“Coming to the U.S., I started to expand and explore a lot more (in) my dancing and my way of making art and teaching as well (as) sharing with the different communities,” Correia

said. “I found a place in doing that here. That I can raise my voice and be heard.”

Correia said though she believes the U.S. supports professions in the arts more than other countries, it’s hard for international students to get hired. Often, dance companies don’t understand work permits or don’t believe international employees have them, she said.

Correia has an Optional Practical Training permit, or OPT, which is an employment authorization that allows graduated students with F-1 visas to work in the U.S. for up to one year.

“It’s hard to find a place that either they know what we’re talking about when we say ‘OPT,’ or that they are willing to learn, and (it’s) much, much harder to find one that is willing to sponsor a different type of visa,” Correia said.

Visa sponsorship allows employers to support an employee’s application for an immigration work visa. Filing fees for the sponsor amount to about \$2,000, but other legal or processing fees can add up, according to a frequently asked questions page by Boundless, an immigration service company.

With ballet audition season beginning in January, Correia plans to look for work at a dance company that will sponsor her visa. She said she’s working with an immigration lawyer to

obtain a more permanent visa to remain in the U.S.

Finish line frustration

Gloria Nakyagaba, a graduate research assistant and lecturer in OU’s College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences, is from Kampala, Uganda. Nakyagaba graduated from OU with a doctorate in geography and environmental sustainability in August. She also holds a master’s degree in geography and a bachelor’s degree in geography education, which she earned in Uganda.

Nakyagaba applied for jobs across the U.S., United Kingdom and Uganda at the beginning of her final year at OU, but said she was rejected by all of them. She applied for her OPT in May, but it was delayed for months due to a backlog, finally coming in at the end of August after she paid for expedited processing.

“I really got sick, and I even remember twice going to the emergency room,” Nakyagaba said. “Later, I (learned) that it was stress and anxiety.”

The research assistant position opened right before the fall semester started and Nakyagaba began work without enough time to prepare.

SUTTON SPINNER/OU DAILY

Farzaneh Hall is home to OU’s resources for international students, including a dedicated student services office and a student lounge.

Nakyagaba said she did everything she was supposed to do — searching for jobs, applying for her OPT on time and meeting every deadline — but not hearing back about employment became frustrating. She said she's proud of herself for being

“People are very much interested in hearing your story. They want to listen, they want to know you, where you come from. They want to know if you have something that you can contribute, they want to know if you have ideas.”

**AMOS AKENA,
OU ALUM**

resilient, but she was afraid and stressed.

“It is difficult to tell a student that is ready at the finish line to not stress about not having a job, because for me, the worst fear was being a Ph.D. graduate that was jobless,” Nakyagaba said.

‘Bad timing’

Amos Akena graduated from OU in May with a master's in regional and city planning and now works as a planning technician for county government in Fallon, Nevada. Akena is from Gulu, Uganda, and also holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from a university in Uganda.

Throughout his time at OU, Akena attended several planning conferences to build relationships, which helped him connect with a construction company in Oklahoma City he shadowed for a few months. However, he said he had to turn down multiple internship opportunities while in school because he didn't have a car and couldn't afford housing in another city.

Akena said he began to look for jobs in March and submitted over 170 applications. He interviewed for many of them but did not hear back from any.

Akena said interviewers would hear his accent or see his education background and quickly realize he wasn't American. Companies didn't want the added cost of visa sponsorship, he said, especially when national political leaders emphasize prioritizing American workers over immigrants.

“They were focusing on America first, right?” Akena said. “That's not a bad thing — that's a good thing. But you are an international student, you want to gain some experience, right? It's just bad timing for all of that.”

Many of Akena's peers didn't get jobs, electing to pursue a doctorate instead, he said. Akena said his professors told him they had never seen the job market so tough before.

The labor market slowed over the summer due to a sharp decline in jobs creation. According to the ADP's National Employment Report for November, job opportunities in small companies with under 50 employees are decreasing and pay growth slowed across sectors.

Advice for international students

Correia encouraged international students to use their time at university to build their professional network. She said the faculty in the OU School of Dance are amazing and can help students find jobs after graduation. Correia also used OU's

Career Center, which she said helped keep her on track to develop professionally.

OU's Career Center can help students adjust their resume, build their social media and get professional photos.

Regardless of how many rejections they get, Correia said students should continue applying for opportunities, though they may often have to explain what OPT is and that they're legal residents — she said it's important to keep trying.

“It can be hard to talk about this topic because I feel that immigration itself is a very hot topic nowadays and kind of scary for people that are not from here, but I really encourage you to just speak up, show off yourself,” Correia said.

Akena said it's important for students to build relationships within their industry by attending conferences and professional events. He encouraged international students to share their ideas and listen to other people's stories and interests too.

“People are very much interested in hearing your story,” Akena said. “They want to listen, they want to know you,



PHOTO PROVIDED

Vitoria Correia works as a resident life assistant with the School of American Ballet.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Amos Akena works as a planning technician for county government in Fallon, Nevada.

where you come from. They want to know if you have something that you can contribute, they want to know if you have ideas.”

Connections Akema made still reach out to him to check in, he said, and he's helped connect friends with job opportunities. He also said students should build relationships with their colleagues.

Nakyagaba encouraged international students to not be deterred by rejections because today's job market isn't favorable for them. She said looking for work is mentally draining, and she advised students to pursue emotional support and counseling as they navigate entering the workforce.

“You've done everything right to get yourself to this point,” Nakyagaba said. “I do not wish for any student right now to feel like they have failed or they are not good enough for whichever jobs that they are applying for.”



SUTTON SPINNER/OU DAILY

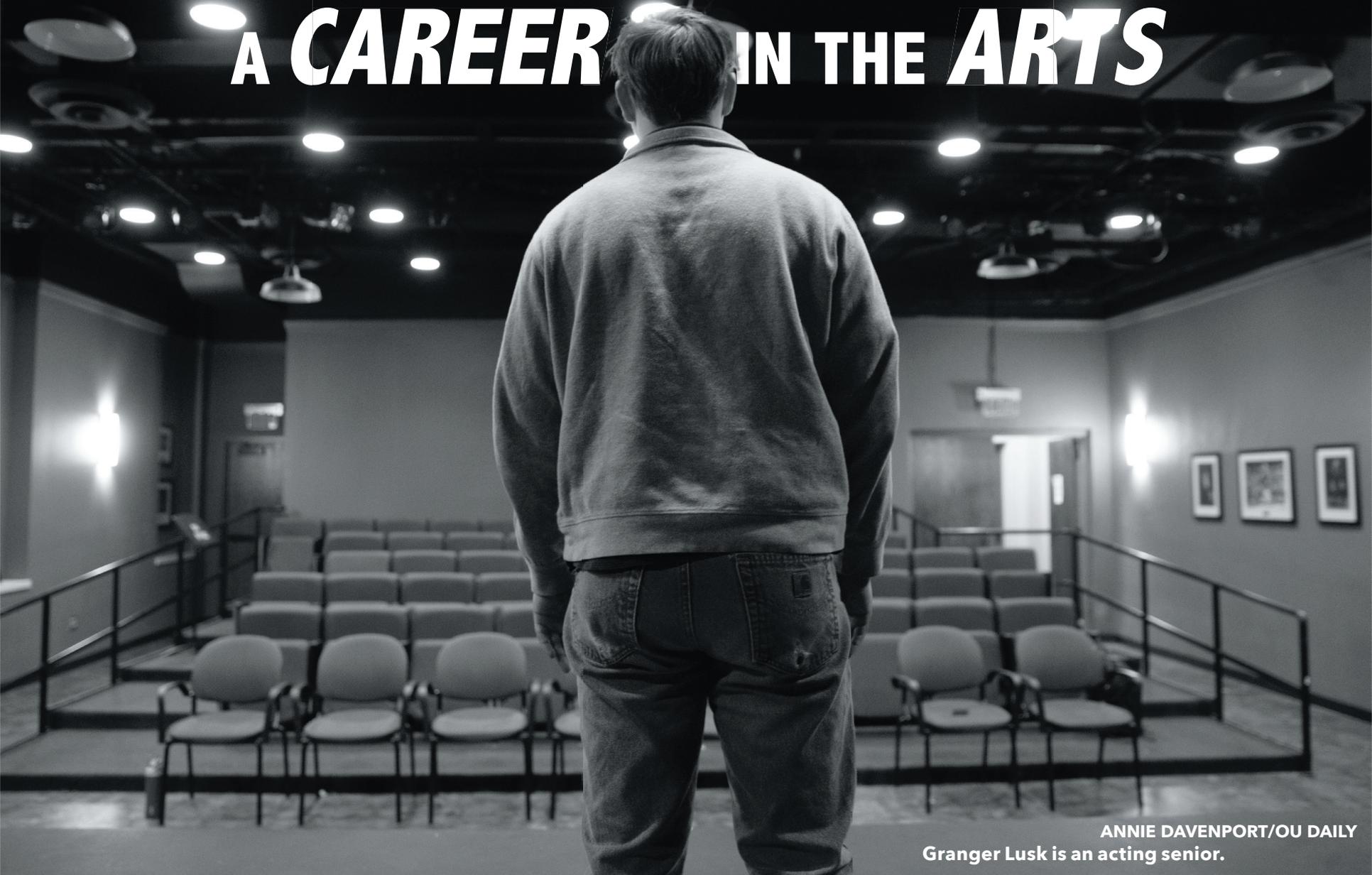
Gloria Nakyagaba works as a research assistant and lecturer for OU's College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences.



SUTTON SPINNER/OU DAILY

Farzaneh International Student Lounge holds events year-round.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR A CAREER IN THE ARTS



ANNIE DAVENPORT/OU DAILY
Granger Lusk is an acting senior.

How the College of Fine Arts prepares students for graduation

BY ASHTYNN CALDWELL • ACALDWELL@OU.EDU

All five schools within the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts provide various internship opportunities for undergraduate students. According to students and faculty in the community, these jobs inspire connection and continuity at OU and beyond.

Mary Margaret Holt, dean of the College of Fine Arts, told OU Daily that the college works to guide students toward future opportunities. Holt said gaining experience within the college requires student initiative and support from faculty and staff.

“I get to watch (our students) for four years, and that’s such an honor. ... It’s just a great pleasure to get to observe their development over time, and then, when possible and if needed, to help guide them into a future that may be productive for them,” Holt said. “One piece of advice I usually have for (students) is to just realize that the future may not be a straight road. ... I hope they will be able to define their goals, but also to keep an open mind.”

Not every school in the college holds a senior showcase, which is an event for graduating students to perform in front

of casting directors and talent agencies. However, Holt said that each school has an equivalent, depending on each field’s discipline.

“There are other substitute activities that take place in our other schools. For instance, (in) the School of Music, there are a number of music organization conferences and group meetings where students go and compete,” Holt said.

Four students across the college attested to the support they received at the university while pursuing careers.

Damerah Coleman, a ballet performance senior, has been

a marketing intern with OU Dance Alumni Association for two years. A large part of her role is to keep OU dance alums in contact with the university and its current students.

Coleman said the experience has allowed her to feel connected to the dance studio and the community around her.

"It's really easy to just get lost in the day-to-day motion," Coleman said. "Being able to have those connections and to see how other alums graduated and are able to obtain all of these different kinds of jobs ... it really helps seeing this is what I'm working for, and it's possible."

Coleman said that Michael Bearden, director of the School of Dance, encouraged her to pursue the student job.

"He helped me get that opportunity, which I'm very grateful for," Coleman said. "The teachers at OU are like that. They help you in any kind of way. ... They help you achieve those dreams."

Holt said the college values this kind of mentorship through the college's class format. She said the average student-to-faculty ratio is one faculty member to eight students.

"(Students) get a great deal of direct mentorship through faculty, to help guide them as they develop their artistic skills and as they develop their career goals," Holt said.

Students are also invited to pursue opportunities outside of OU that will further their career goals, according to Holt.

"What we encourage our students in the performing areas to do is the summer before they're going to graduate from OU, to seek out some companies or organizations ... and determine whether those organizations have a summer program," Holt said. "We try to help students identify opportunities that will be most appropriate to their goals and to their development in the artistic realm."

Audrey Bickerstaff, an art history senior, had a summer internship at the Business Council for the Arts, based in Dallas. Through the position, she said she earned credit hours and gained valuable experience.

"It really allowed me to be able to think about how I can apply the knowledge that I'm learning in the classroom in the real world," Bickerstaff said. "A lot of in-classroom learning is a lot of lectures and things like that, which are very important to have the base knowledge, ... but I think (the internship) gives a really nice real-world application to what you're learning."

While Bickerstaff pursued work experience independent of the university, she said her instructors gave her the push she needed to accomplish her goals.

"(Instructors), even before I got my internship, do a really good job of giving you real-world, applicable knowledge," Bickerstaff said.

Opportunities on-stage, off-campus

Students can also be exposed to fine arts opportunities across the Norman community. Just a few blocks from campus, Main Street is home to the oldest theater in the city.

The Sooner Theatre first opened its doors in 1929. Almost 100 years later, the theater offers paid internship opportunities to OU students. Jennifer Baker, the theater's executive director, wrote in an email to OU Daily that working with young performers is one of the highlights of her job.

"We utilize students through the work study program, as well as contracted positions for various jobs at the theater and The Studio of The Sooner Theatre, our performing arts academy," Baker wrote. "We hire instructors for dance, acting, production classes, front desk, lighting and sound design, tech

and more."

Megan Austin, a vocal music education senior, has served in various positions at Sooner Theatre.

"I came to OU because I knew that there was a great community theater in town that would give me lots of opportunities," Austin said. "I asked if they needed any help."

Austin started as a volunteer for the theater shows, controlling spotlights and helping set up microphones.

"I also was a child wrangler for their shows," Austin said, jokingly. "At first, it was a volunteer position. After the spring of my freshman year, they offered me a paid position in the fall of my sophomore year."

"Our professors are always encouraging us to take outside opportunities. Norman is a very flourishing community within the arts and it's super valuable if you seek out your own experiences."

**MEGAN AUSTIN,
VOCAL MUSIC EDUCATION SENIOR**

"I've been able to take the skills I learned in the classroom and put them into real practice. I feel much more prepared for student teaching in the spring."

Austin also said the connections she built through the position are invaluable to her. She expressed her appreciation for Baker and her work amplifying the arts in the community.

"(Baker) has built an incredible community and a flourishing house for the arts in Norman," Austin said. "It's been really inspiring getting to learn from her and learn about her entrepreneurship."

Baker wrote that while students work alongside the best staff, the experience they receive on the job is incredibly important.

"They get hands-on experience in productions, and running a non-profit," Baker wrote. "If hired as instructors, they obviously get classroom experience and there's really nothing better or more rewarding."

Austin said some faculty and staff within OU's School of Music encouraged her to pursue working with the local theater, marking a blend of support from faculty and her own individual initiative.

"Our professors are always encouraging us to take outside opportunities," Austin said. "Norman is a very flourishing community within the arts and it's super valuable if you seek out your own experiences."

Recruiting the new generation

The positions students hold across the community are important for the future of the performing arts, Austin said, but some roles on campus demonstrate the immediate impact of students.

Granger Lusk, an acting senior, has volunteered for three years as a student ambassador in the College of Fine Arts.

Since the drama conservatory only accepts around 16-20 students a year, the student recruitment team is essential to the college, Lusk said.

"(It's) a student team that helps kind of build a bridge between potential students and current students," Lusk said. "We do three on-campus audition dates every spring, and we are responsible for overseeing those, managing those, assisting with them and making sure that everybody's in the right place when they need to be."

Lusk said the team reached out to him in his first year.

"A lot of times they actually prefer the younger classmen to do it, because those students were just in that position, auditioning and things like that," Lusk said.

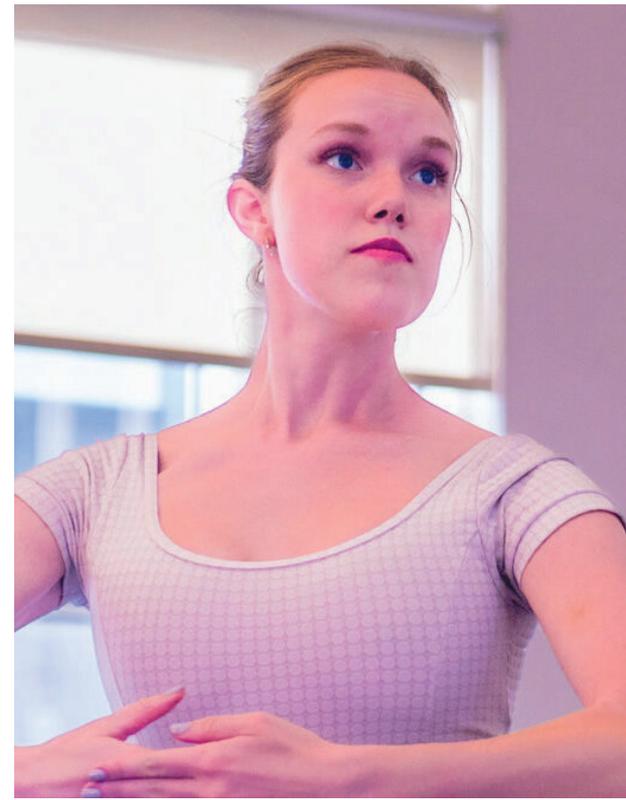
Holt said the goal is to turn students into their own artistic advocates. For Lusk and other students in the School of Drama, this includes mock auditions and mock interviews.

Lusk said these experiences are essential. He and many of his peers are pursuing full-time, freelance acting jobs, which makes it hard to find applicable internships. He said that despite this, the university provides students with opportunities to continue to make connections with professionals.

"Our school does a senior showcase in the spring for seniors, and we are flown to Chicago," Lusk said. "We have an in-person showcase in front of casting directors, talent agencies and management agencies."

The blend of student opportunities, both academic and occupational, allows fine arts students to feel heard.

"(The experience) has actually been really nice and rewarding," Lusk said. "I feel like I have a voice."



SHAYFER CANNON/OU DAILY

Damerah Coleman is a ballet performance senior and marketing intern with the OU Dance Alumni Association.

READY FOR THE CLASSROOM

Norman Public Schools offers future teachers real-world experiences

BY AUDREY MCCLOUR • AUDREY.K.MCCLOUR-1@OU.EDU

With over 16,000 students attending a total of 26 schools and academies, Norman Public Schools is the eighth largest school district in Oklahoma, according to its website.

Located in a college town, NPS offers a variety of ways to get OU education majors involved in the classroom.

The Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education offers its elementary education majors practicum and tutoring opportunities, which are faculty-supervised field work experiences. Students are also required to complete a semester-long, full-time teaching internship, designed to prepare them for certification.

Oklahoma has consistently ranked near the bottom nationally in public education with funding struggles and low test scores. A recent report ranked the state No. 14 for teacher “opportunity and competition.”

Math practicum at Lincoln Elementary School

Anna Christian, an elementary education senior, said NPS helps prepare OU students for post-graduation opportunities by offering required practicum courses at some of its schools.

“Norman is a college town due to OU, and (with) NPS’ proximity, they are heavy on making sure that the educators here are educated,” Christian said.

Christian is required to complete practicum courses through the school district. She has spent two semesters at Washington and Wilson elementary schools, helping first and second graders build literacy, fluency and comprehension skills. This semester, Christian is working on a math practicum at Lincoln Elementary.

Christian said the courses she’s taking at OU allow her to practice pre-K through third grade math, going hand-in-hand with the work she does at Lincoln.

“It’s all kind of reinforcing everything that we’ve learned up to this point and getting us ready to do our preinternship and our internship programs,” Christian said.

While the literacy practicum was a twice-a-week commitment, Christian said the math practicum only requires four 30-minute visits throughout the semester.

Christian said the College of Education helps students get involved in the practicums.

“They help you go with each step to build up to the next,” Christian said.

According to Christian, NPS teachers sign up to have OU students do practicums in their classrooms, then students choose a

time that works best for them.

Christian said the practicums have helped her understand what it looks like to make and implement lesson plans.

“I’ve enjoyed (the practicums) thoroughly, ...” Christian said. “It’s helping me learn those tools with somebody who’s been in the field a long time.”

Christian said combining her usual courses with classroom work can be overwhelming, but the college eases students into it.

“They build up (a system) so you feel more prepared,” Christian said. “They have you work one-on-one with a student and they have you observe a classroom, and then they have you working with a small group, but you’re not actually teaching until your final semester.”

Inspired by her practicum experience, Christian hopes to specialize in literacy or math education in the future. With the state of education in Oklahoma often politicized, Christian said her primary goal is to make a difference in the lives of students.

“The current political climate is sort of affecting what we’re able to teach our students, ...” Christian said. “As much as policies are a big factor, a bigger factor for me is I’m still making an effect on these students’ lives.”

Tutoring at Reagan Elementary School

Catherine Cotton, an elementary education junior, works with a second grader twice a week at Reagan Elementary. Cotton is paired with one student for the semester and tutors them for about an hour on Monday and Wednesday.

“It’s been probably the highlight of my semester, ...” Cotton said. “I’ve loved it so much and really been able to build a connection with my student.”

Cotton said that while tutoring is one part of a class she’s taking, she also makes lesson plans. She then implements those plans into her tutoring sessions each week.

“I can read about this stuff in a textbook all I want,” Cotton said. “When I actually go and get to see how students are actually learning and what techniques work best, that has really solidified what I’m learning.”

Cotton said balancing her time was difficult at first but planning lessons ahead of time has helped.

“It was kind of a lot because we were making lesson plans and we have to have those submitted the day before tutoring, ...” Cotton said. “But now I’ve kind of gotten into a rhythm with it. Especially now that I see what my student needs, and I can kind



PHOTOS BY ANNIE DAVENPORT/OU DAILY

Anna Christian is an elementary education senior.



Evie Jackson is a language arts education senior.

of start planning ahead for it.”

Cotton said working for NPS has shown her what to look for in districts post graduation.

“I’ve seen a lot of the resources they have for their students, ...” Cotton said. “I’ve also been able to witness a lot of their support for first-year teachers. And so I’ve learned (that) even if I don’t teach in Norman, I want to teach in a district that has similar values and similar support.”

When asked about how the politicization of education in



Catherine Cotton is an elementary education junior.

Oklahoma might affect her passion for teaching, Cotton said she wants to be there for her future students.

"No matter what the political climate is, I just want students to know there's one person at least that cares for them," Cotton said.

Teaching at Whittier Middle School

Evie Jackson, a language arts education senior who graduated in fall 2025, spent her final semester in a middle school classroom. Jackson student taught at Whittier Middle School, where she worked eight hours a day, five days a week.

"I am their teacher, ..." Jackson said. "It's a full-time job."

At the beginning of the semester, Jackson was placed with a co-operating teacher, also known as a CT, who supervises and mentors student teachers throughout the semester.

The CT also advises OU students who are navigating teaching for the first time, according to Jackson. She said her CT helped her balance her time while finishing her degree.

"I have an absolutely wonderful CT, ..." Jackson said. "One of the first things she told me was, 'You do not take anything home. ... I have done okay at keeping the two things separate.'"

Throughout the semester, Jackson slowly took on more responsibility in the classroom. Jackson said she started by teaching lessons her CT had planned but later moved on to becoming the primary teacher for about three weeks.

"You do all the planning, you do all the grading, you do all the stuff. And your CT still has to be available to you, but they can be in the break room," Jackson said. "Theoretically, you

are the only teacher in the room."

Aside from her CT, Jackson received support from a university supervisor, someone who has experience working in a classroom and can offer teaching advice. She said the university makes sure students have all the resources they need.

"I can read about this stuff in a textbook all I want. When I actually go and get to see how students are actually learning and what techniques work best, that has really solidified what I'm learning."

**CATHERINE COTTON,
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION JUNIOR**

dents to schools and teachers.

"They sort of handle most of the hard work there," Jackson said.

Jackson believes student teaching with NPS has been a great networking opportunity and hopes to work with the district in the future.

"I absolutely love NPS," Jackson said. "Everything that I

Jackson said OU's language arts education department handled most of the CT and classroom placement process. Jackson filled out a survey about her school and grade preferences, and department heads matched stu-

dents to schools and teachers.

have noticed about them and how they run their schools and how they treat their teachers just seems really uplifting. ... I would love to work there at some point in my career."

Jackson said her career goals consist of teaching middle school, earning a master's degree and trying her hand at working out of state. Jackson believes working out of state will help her avoid burnout.

"At some point, I would love to work out of state just because I think that a lot of really great teachers either become burnt out or become jaded to the profession, ..." Jackson said. "The way that you avoid that is you keep moving. Maybe that doesn't mean necessarily getting a new job every few years, but it means making sure that you are keeping up on the latest research and meeting new people at conferences and taking time to visit other classrooms in your school."

Jackson noted her passion for reading and how book bans can affect education.

"I love English so deeply. Reading and writing are my two great passions in life," Jackson said. "(Politicians) are trying to remove some very key aspects of (English language arts) education, specifically just with books getting banned."

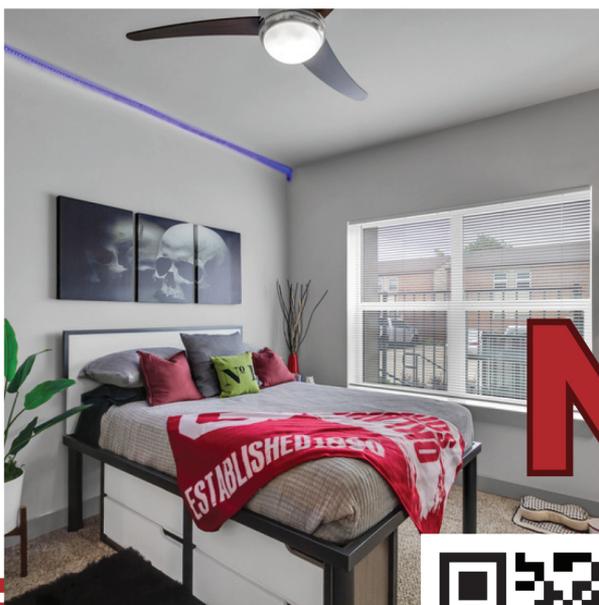
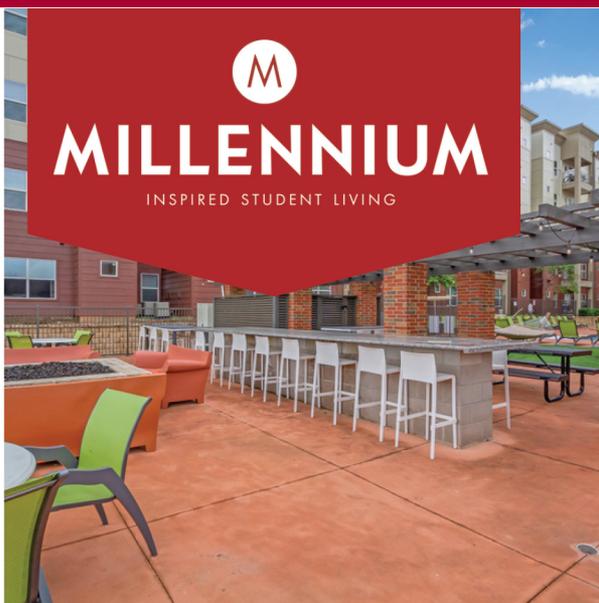
Despite these challenges, Jackson said she hopes her future classroom will be a safe space for students.

"If they know that they can come into my class and feel safe and feel supported and know that I have got their back no matter what," Jackson said, "then I think it'll all be worth it."



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SAI YADAV/OU DAILY

Deonnie Moodie is an associate professor and academic chair for the OU Department of Religious Studies.



ANNIE DAVENPORT/OU DAILY

Sydney Tatom is a history and journalism junior.

‘YOU CAN DO ANYTHING’

From big to small, OU colleges tailor support to student needs

BY ANDREW PAREDES • ANDREW.J.PAREDES-1@OU.EDU

Hands-on experiences such as internships, research, study abroad and special admissions programs allow OU students to gain a unique leg up when it comes to career building and networking, faculty and students report.

OU colleges provide graduate and undergraduate students with opportunities to meet new people, visit unique locations and explore their professional fields — all to advance their careers.

From OU’s largest and smallest colleges, here is how faculty support students and how that has shaped the student experience.

Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences

The Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences is OU’s first and largest college, with more than 8,000 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students enrolled, according to its website.

Deonnie Moodie, associate professor and academic chair of religious studies, said the college’s size can have both positive and negative effects, considering a large portion of OU’s student population is situated in it.

“The challenge, and the promise, is that with a Dodge degree you can do anything. You can do literally anything. That’s wonderful,” Moodie said. “It also doesn’t help students imagine what that looks like.”

Moodie also serves as the faculty fellow for co-curricular engagement, acting as a facilitator and coordinator for internships, research and study abroad opportunities within the College of Arts and Sciences.

Moodie said she is able to make career-building opportunities more accessible to students in the College of Arts and Sciences despite its large size.

“We have (around) 30 departments, we have over 60 majors, we have over 60 minors, we have tons of courses (and) over 600 faculty, so we are absolutely huge,” Moodie said. “What we have been doing as a college is individual departments offering a whole range of internships already, and then there’s the new initiative that I’m a part of.”

According to Moodie, some College of Arts and Sciences degree programs, like social work and library information systems, have required internships in their curricula. However, Moodie said some programs do not require internships,

which is something she is working to change.

“That’s where my position was created,” Moodie said. “What we’re doing is we are actually building new degree programs where internships will be an integral part of the degree.”

Moodie added that alumni support is critical to launching students into their first professional experiences, and she is working to create more direct pathways for students.

“One of the many things that we’ve been doing is connecting more directly with our alumni to see, ‘OK, ... would you like to host an OU student as an intern?’ to create more direct connections with people who have our degrees, know how valuable they are and can create those pathways for our students,” Moodie said.

Sydney Tatom, a history and journalism junior, serves as an

archival intern at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. In this role, Tatom said she helps organize historical datasets owned by the museum so future research can be conducted more easily and resources can be more accessible. Tatom credited the communication in the College of Arts and Sciences with landing her internship.

“My wants and needs were made a priority by the people in Dodge who were helping me get my internship. I felt really cared for by the process because what was important to me was reciprocated by them, and it felt like they thought it was just as important.”

**SYDNEY TATOM,
HISTORY AND JOURNALISM JUNIOR**

“Somebody from Dodge emailed all of the junior and senior history majors and ... gave us some contacts, and I think in that sense, the process was really accessible and really easy,” Tatom said.

Tatom said that from the email, juniors and seniors who were interested in the opportunity were paired with advisers



ESTHER HODSON/OU DAILY

Paul Gilmore is dean of the Honors College, one of the smallest colleges at OU with around 1,800 students.

who made the process easier. She said the process felt individualized despite being in the largest college at OU.

“We had advisers and people there helping us to figure out wherever we wanted to go, what work we wanted to do,” Tatom said.

Tatom said she wanted to work at the museum because of its significance in Oklahoma and U.S. history.

“I told the person who is in charge of helping me get the internship, right off the bat, ‘I really wanted to work at the (Oklahoma City) bombing memorial,’” Tatom said. “That was something that I thought was really important to Oklahoma history and was something that I wanted to have a small role in if I could.”

Tatom noted the reciprocal manner of the help she received from the College of Arts and Sciences and said she felt cared for by college leadership.

“My wants and needs were made a priority by the people in Dodge who were helping me get my internship,” Tatom said. “I felt really cared for by the process because what was important to me was reciprocated by them, and it felt like they thought it was just as important.”

Tatom said that despite the size of the college, she still felt supported in finding an internship.

“Even though it’s the biggest college at OU, it’s one that really cares about their students and cares about their individual paths and journeys to whatever the end goal is for them,” Tatom said. “Truly, I do think Dodge really cares for the opportunities that are available to its students, and I do think that they do their best to get students where they want to go.”

Honors College

The OU Honors College was first given college status by former OU President David Boren in 1997, according to the college’s website.



SAI YADAV/OU DAILY

Papers rest on a bookshelf in Deonnie Moodie’s office.

Paul Gilmore, dean of the Honors College, said he believes the Honors College’s smaller size is its strength.

“We have about 1,800 students in the Honors College right now, ... (and the) honors-specific classes that they do take are usually about 15 to 20 students,” Gilmore said. “So for a student taking, say, Intro to Micro Economics, instead of being in a class of 300 or 400, they’re in a class of 20.”

Gilmore added that smaller class sizes give Honors College students the unique opportunity to build a closer, more personal relationship with their instructors.

“They get that closer connection with the faculty member who’s teaching them, (and) they get to know the faculty member,” Gilmore said. “The faculty member knows them in a way that’s more difficult in (a) class of 400.”

Gilmore said one of the advantages of OU is its alumni network, which adds an additional layer of support for Honors College students.

“No matter what field you’re in, ... there’s going to be some OU connection,” Gilmore said. “Our job is to make sure that those are readily available.”

Honors College students, particularly pre-law and pre-med students, can begin their post-graduate education early, according to the Honors College website.

Some Honors College students are granted automatic admission to OU’s College of Law and College of Medicine.

According to the website, a maximum of 25 candidates are selected each year to join the Honors College’s Pre-Law Scholars Program. Between five and eight incoming high school seniors who will join the Honors College are selected for the Medical Humanities Scholars Program.

Gilmore said that a pre-law scholar student’s final year of undergraduate studies counts as one year of law school, fast-tracking the student to complete law school in six years rather than seven.



SAI YADAV/OU DAILY

Deonnie Moodie acts as a coordinator for internships, research and study abroad for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Joseph Mathew, a vocal performance senior and Rhodes Scholar finalist, is a medical humanities scholar in the Honors College. He said that with interests in both music and medicine, the Honors College gave him the resources to pursue both and encouragement to explore medicine from different perspectives.

“That wasn’t really something that was in the cards for me if I wasn’t in this program,” Mathew said. “I probably wouldn’t have chosen to do a music major, even though medical school doesn’t have any requirements of what major you have to be.”

Mathew said the guarantee of acceptance into the OU College of Medicine added a layer of security to his time at college, which allowed him to explore other interests like music.

Mathew said he believes his blend of interests will help him stand out to employers in the future.

“Now I’ve found ways to bridge music and medicine in a way that’s very unique to my own passions,” Mathew said. “That’ll help, especially with career development. It puts me in a unique situation because it’s such a niche combination of interests — it helps you stand out to medical schools in the future.”

Mathew said he plans to continue to pursue vocal performance while in medical school.

“In the future, when I am in medical school, I will continue to perform and continue to sing because I’ve discovered how much I love that side of myself,” Mathew said. “I don’t want to give it up.”

Mathew added that faculty and staff in the Honors College have been supportive of his pursuits.

“Everyone is very supportive and wants to see me succeed,” Mathew said. “They push me in the direction of, ‘You can do both,’ and they don’t try to be like, ‘No, you’ve got to pick one or the other.’ They’re all very vision-forward.”



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CAREER CENTER

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Opening Doors: How the OU Career Center Is Shaping the Next Era of Student Opportunity



SPONSORED CONTENT | BY DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The University of Oklahoma continues to build a campus environment where students can explore interests, develop skills, and prepare for meaningful careers. Central to that effort is the OU Career Center, which has expanded its reach and impact through new institutional investments and strengthened partnerships across academic colleges and student programs.

Rather than focusing only on job searching at graduation, the Career Center now plays a broader role in helping students understand how their experiences, in the classroom, in campus involvement, and through hands-on opportunities, connect to the professional world.

“OU is committed to ensuring students have access to intentional, high-impact preparation for what comes next,” said David Surratt, Ed.D., vice president for student affairs and dean of students. “The Career Center is a cornerstone of that work, helping students understand their strengths, explore opportunities, and take confident steps toward their future.”

A Campus Network Built Around Opportunity

The Career Center’s growing collaboration with academic units reflects a shift toward a more integrated model of career preparation. Faculty bring Career Center staff into classrooms for presentations, departments develop assignments aligned with employer-valued competencies, and student groups partner on programming designed to help members explore pathways connected to their interests.

“Our approach is intentionally collaborative,” said Robin Huston, executive director of the OU Career Center. “Students engage with career concepts in multiple places — through classes, involvement, advising, and experiential learning. The goal is to connect those experiences so students can clearly see how they support their readiness for post-graduation opportunities.”

This shared approach ensures that career development is accessible throughout a student’s time at OU, not limited to specific moments or milestones.

Spaces Where Students Can Explore, Test Ideas, and Build Skills

OU students increasingly look for ways to apply what they learn in the classroom. In response, the Career Center has expanded access to opportunities that support exploration and skill development, including:

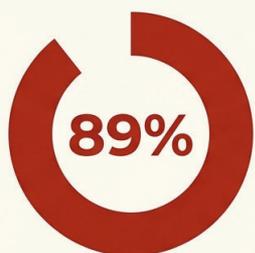
- Industry micro-internships
- Skill-based workshops and employer-led learning sessions
- On-campus employment connected to core competencies
- Career communities aligned with broad interest areas

These experiences help students gain clarity about their goals while building the kinds of adaptable, transferable skills employers consistently seek.

One student, Gabrielle Williams, a graduate teaching assistant in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication and a master’s student in strategic communication and digital strategy, said engaging with several Career Center programs helped clarify her professional interests.

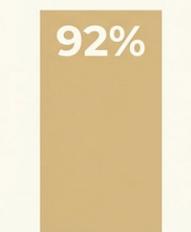
The Proof is in the Data: Sooner Success

Every year, we collect post-graduation data from the First-Destination Survey to track the outcomes of an OU education.



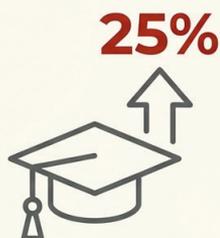
Success Rate

The percentage of graduates who are employed, enrolled in a graduate program, participating in voluntary service, or serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.



Working

The percentage of students who have accepted a full-time professional position out of those seeking one.



Continuing Education

The percentage of students who are furthering their education after graduation out of those who sought to do so.

Our survey process is based on guidelines from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and data collection concludes six months after May graduation.

Chart Your Course Beyond Your Major

Did you know that your job search does not have to be limited by your major?

We've created six **Career Communities** based on *industry* rather than major. This helps you narrow your aspirations into relevant fields of interest.



By choosing a Community, you connect to:

- ➔ Specialized advising
- ✓ Targeted career resources
- ✓ Relevant job opportunities
- ✓ Industry-specific networking events

Still unsure? The **Exploration Community** provides helpful information and support for finding your path. You are encouraged to explore more than one community!

“I wasn’t sure where to start,” she said. “Talking with the Career Center helped me understand which skills I already had, and which roles might be a good fit. It made everything feel more manageable.”

The emphasis is not on having a predetermined path but on giving students approachable entry points to explore possibilities.

Strong Industry Partnerships and Employer Connections

OU’s employer partners continue to engage deeply with the university through career fairs, targeted recruitment events, mentoring opportunities, and project collaborations. These recurring partnerships provide students with direct access to organizations across sectors, including technology, engineering, business, healthcare, communications, public service, and the arts.

“Employers continue to invest time and resources into recruiting OU students because they recognize the preparation and adaptability our students bring,” Huston said. “Their ongoing engagement is a key indicator of confidence in the

strengths of our graduates.”

These relationships support internships, mentorships, and full-time opportunities and help students understand current industry expectations and trends.

A University Focused on Student Futures

OU’s expanded investment in career readiness aligns with a long-term vision for student success: one where every student has access to experiences, advising, and networks that support a strong transition into life after graduation.

“The work happening through the Career Center is part of a shared responsibility across campus,” Surratt said. “We want every student to leave OU with clarity, confidence, and a connection to the opportunities that support their dreams.”

As the Career Center continues to grow its partnerships, enhance experiential learning pathways, and expand support for students, the university remains focused on building a modern career ecosystem that aligns with workforce needs and strengthens the long-term value of an OU education.

For more information, visit ou.edu/career.

OU CAREER CENTER SERVICES

Students can access the Career Center’s full suite of services, including:

- Career advising and exploration
- Résumé and cover letter development
- Mock interviews and preparation workshops
- Career fairs and employer networking events
- The Career Closet for free professional attire
- Professional headshots through the Iris Air Photobooth
- Handshake, OU’s platform for job and internship opportunities

CONTACT US

Oklahoma Memorial Union
900 Asp Ave. | Suite 320
Norman, OK 73019

Phone: (405) 325-1974

Email: careercenter@ou.edu

Website: www.ou.edu/career

Social Media:

Instagram: @oucareercenter

LinkedIn: OU Career Center

YouTube: OU Career Center Channel

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

All-Majors Spring Career Fair:

Wednesday, Feb.11 | 12:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Spring Teacher Job Fair:

Wednesday, March 4 | 9:30 a.m – 11:30 a.m.

Oklahoma Engineering Futures Career Fair:

Wednesday, March 4 | Noon – 4 p.m.

Log in to Handshake for full event details, locations, and a complete list of attending organizations.





TAKE YOUR FIRST STEP TO SUCCESS

You have a dedicated partner in your career journey. Start today with one of these simple actions.



1. Activate Your Handshake Account

This is your hub for jobs, events, and appointments. Use your OU 4x4 to log in now.



2. Schedule an Appointment

Meet with a career adviser to create a personalized plan for your goals.



3. Get Your Professional Headshot

Stop by the Iris Air Photobooth (M-F, 9 AM - 5 PM) for a free, high-quality photo.

Since its founding, Esports & Co-Curricular Innovation has engaged **more than 1,200 students** in leadership, production, competition, and development roles.

Q&A WITH MIKE “MOOG” AGUILAR

Level Up Your Career Opportunities with Esports

BY DIVISION OF
STUDENT AFFAIRS

At OU, Esports & Co-Curricular Innovation (ECCI) has expanded far beyond competitive play. Through ECCI, students gain professional experience in production, leadership, media, operations, outreach, and research. Founded by program director Mike “Moog” Aguilar, the program blends applied learning with real project work, giving students opportunities to build skills that translate directly into internships and careers. ECCI now reaches more than a thousand students across disciplines and connects academic learning with hands-on development in a rapidly growing field.

The following Q&A introduces readers to the breadth of opportunities within ECCI and shows how students can turn their interest in gaming, creativity, or technology into meaningful professional pathways.

Q1. What is OU Esports & Co-Curricular Innovation (ECCI)?

Aguilar: OU Esports & Co-Curricular Innovation is a university-supported program within Student Affairs that brings together competitive esports, media production, student leadership, research, outreach, and professional development. It is a space where students gain hands-on experience that connects directly to future careers.

Q2. How is ECCI different from a traditional gaming club?

Aguilar: ECCI is built around applied learning. Students are not only playing games. They are running productions, managing projects, leading teams, supporting research, coordinating events, and working on real initiatives that mirror professional environments.

Q3. Do students have to identify as a “serious gamer” to get involved?

Aguilar: Not at all. Data shows that more than



two-thirds of students play some type of game, including mobile games like Candy Crush and Pokémon Go, even if they don't identify as gamers. Many of the most active roles in ECCI are behind the scenes in media, marketing, production, operations, outreach, research, and leadership. Students from many backgrounds find a place in ECCI without ever competing.

Q4. How does ECCI connect to what students are learning in class?

Aguilar: Students apply classroom knowledge to real projects. Marketing students run campaigns, journalism students work in live production environments, business students support operations and analysis, and creative students build professional portfolios for public audiences.

Q5. Which academic colleges and campus units does ECCI partner with?

Aguilar: ECCI collaborates with multiple academic colleges and campus units across the university, including journalism and mass communication, fine arts, business, engineering, computer science, education, health-related programs, and student support offices. These partnerships help students link

academic study with applied experience.

Q6. How does ECCI help students prepare for jobs and internships?

Aguilar: Students graduate with leadership experience, portfolio-ready project work, measurable outcomes, and experience collaborating across teams. This gives them a competitive edge when applying for jobs, internships, or graduate programs.

Q7. Is ECCI only relevant for students pursuing gaming careers?

Aguilar: No. While some students go on to work in esports and gaming, many move into marketing, media production, live events, communications, design, education, business, and technology roles.

Q8. What advice would you give a student who is curious about getting involved?

Aguilar: Start by exploring the type of work that excites you, whether it is creative, technical, business-focused, leadership-driven, or research-based. Attend an event, talk with current student leaders, or look for open roles. You do not have to be a hardcore gamer to find a meaningful pathway.

PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER SPORT

How the OU Career Center Supports Student-Athletes

BY DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student-athletes at the University of Oklahoma balance significant academic, athletic, and personal commitments. Yet even with demanding schedules, they bring a collection of strengths that employers consistently value: discipline, teamwork, resilience, leadership, and the ability to perform under pressure. The OU Career Center builds on those strengths by helping student-athletes understand, articulate, and expand them as they prepare for life beyond competition.

Located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, the OU Career Center offers a comprehensive set of services that support student-athletes at every stage of their professional development. From individualized advising to professional preparation and employer engagement, the Center works to ensure that every student-athlete has the tools to transition confidently into internships, graduate programs, and long-term careers.

Translating Athletic Strengths Into Professional Skills Teamwork is one of the most visible competencies student-athletes bring to campus. Through daily practice, shared responsibilities, and competitive performance, they learn to collaborate, communicate across diverse groups, and stay aligned toward a common goal. The Career Center helps student-athletes understand how these experiences directly translate into workplace expectations.

“Student-athletes already demonstrate the types of competencies employers look for,” said Rick Dubler, associate director of the OU Career Center. “Our role is to help them recognize those strengths and communicate them clearly in resumes, interviews, and networking conversations. The confidence that comes from understanding your own skill set is transformative.”

Intramural sports are often used as one example of how teamwork extends outside varsity competition. These experiences reinforce the collaborative skills that employers expect, including balancing different viewpoints, sharing responsibility, and taking collective ownership of outcomes. The Career Center works with student-athletes to connect these experiences to broader academic and professional settings, strengthening their ability to present teamwork as a core competency.

Building Career Readiness Through Crimson Career Ready

Teamwork is just one of eight competencies emphasized in Crimson Career Ready, OU’s university-wide career readiness initiative. The program highlights the skills employers consistently seek, including communication, professionalism, leadership, perspective awareness and critical thinking.

“Student-athletes are incredibly driven, but they often underestimate how much their athletic experience prepares them for the workplace,” said Justin Morris, associate director

of the OU Career Center. “Crimson Career Ready provides a framework that helps them map what they do every day in their sport to the skills they will need throughout their career.”

Through this initiative, the Career Center teaches student-athletes how to describe their experiences in ways employers recognize, helping them translate discipline, routine, time management, and resilience into professional language. For athletes whose identities are deeply tied to their sport, this process is especially important. It helps them build confidence in who they are beyond athletics and prepare for lifelong career management.

Comprehensive Services Designed With Student-Athletes in Mind

Like all OU students, student-athletes receive full access to the Career Center’s support resources, each designed to build professional readiness and expand opportunities.

Job Opportunities and Career Exploration

Through Handshake, OU’s career management platform, student-athletes can explore job and internship postings, connect with employers, register for workshops, and attend career fairs that draw hundreds of organizations to campus each year.

Handshake is a critical tool for identifying opportunities that align with student-athletes’ majors, personal values, and long-term goals, especially for those managing intensive training and travel schedules.

Professional Preparation and Advising

The Career Center supports student-athletes through:

- Free professional headshots via the Iris Air Photobooth
- Personalized career advising that addresses resumes, applications, graduate school, and long-term planning
- Mock interviews that help students practice, receive feedback, and refine their communication

These services help students present themselves confidently and highlight the leadership, adaptability, and perseverance developed through athletics.

Supporting Success Beyond Sport

The OU Career Center plays a significant role in helping University of Oklahoma student-athletes connect their athletic identity to future opportunities. By reinforcing essential competencies like teamwork, leadership, and professionalism, and by providing practical tools such as advising, employer engagement, and access to professional attire, the Career Center ensures student-athletes are prepared not only to succeed at OU, but to thrive long after graduation.

“When student-athletes begin to see how their experiences translate into strengths employers value, it opens doors,” Dubler said. “They realize they are already equipped with many of the tools they need. We simply help them activate those strengths in the career world.”

To learn more about resources available to OU student-athletes, visit ou.edu/career.



OU CAREER CLOSET

The Career Closet, in partnership with the OU Food Pantry, provides a wide range of professional attire at no cost to students, faculty, staff and alumni.

How It Works: You may select up to four items per person per semester. Each piece of a suit counts as a single item.

FALL 2025: BY THE NUMBERS





CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The OU Career Center partners with stakeholders to enhance student services, expand employer outreach, and create exclusive branding opportunities for sponsors.

Sponsors gain campus visibility, access to top OU talent, and opportunities to host workshops, participate in career fairs, and support impactful initiatives like the Career Closet.

For more information on becoming a corporate partner, visit www.ou.edu/career/about/corporate-partners, call (405) 325-1974, or email careercenter@ou.edu.

OKLAHOMA LEVEL PARTNERS

- Chevron
- Enterprise Mobility
- MidFirst Bank
- ONEOK
- Mewbourne Oil Company
- Williams
- ConocoPhillips

SOONER LEVEL PARTNERS

- WhitleyPenn
- Shell
- Phillips66
- Love's

QUIZ: WHAT'S YOUR CAREER VIBE?

Find out which career vibe matches your personality, goals, and the way you move through the world.

QUESTIONS

When you walk into a group project, what's your default mode?

- Take charge and build the plan
- Get everyone excited and connected
- Design the slides and make it look amazing
- Run the numbers and fix inefficiencies
- Figure out what people need and keep things moving

Pick your ideal workspace:

- A high-rise office with a skyline view
- A collaborative studio
- A cozy corner café
- Dual monitors with spreadsheets open
- On the go, talking with people all day

Your friends would describe you as:

- Ambitious
- Bubbly and social
- Creative
- Analytical
- Supportive

Choose a weekend activity:

- Networking brunch
- Concert or festival
- Thrifting or crafting
- Puzzle marathon
- Volunteering

What motivates you most?

- Growth and success
- Community and connection
- Creative expression
- Solving problems
- Helping people

SCORING

Tally your answers:

A: ___ **B:** ___ **C:** ___ **D:** ___ **E:** ___

- Most A's = The Organizer
- Most B's = The People Champion
- Most C's = The Creative Problem-Solver
- Most D's = The Builder / Analyst
- Most E's = The Advocate

Tie-breaker: Your answer to Question 5.

RESULTS

THE ORGANIZER

You love structure, rely on a plan, and people trust you to get things done.

Career fits: project management, operations, administrative roles
OU tie-ins: Student Affairs, Leadership programs, Student Life

THE PEOPLE CHAMPION

You energize groups, build relationships, and bring people together.

Career fits: HR, education, nonprofits, student services
OU tie-ins: Advocacy & Education, Housing & Residence Life

THE CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVER

You see possibilities and ideas everywhere.

Career fits: marketing, PR, design, UX, digital content
OU tie-ins: OU Daily, MarCom, creative internships

THE BUILDER / ANALYST

You're logical, detail-oriented, and always improving systems.

Career fits: tech, engineering, finance, analytics
OU tie-ins: Engineering, Price College, Career Communities

THE ADVOCATE

You're values-driven, impact-focused, and committed to equity.

Career fits: government, public policy, community organizations
OU tie-ins: Capitol Scholars, Inasmuch Fellowship

OU CAREER CENTER: 2024-2025



6,584 STUDENTS
ATTENDED A
CAREER FAIR

2,699 ADVISING
SESSIONS

37,605 EMPLOYERS ON
HANDSHAKE

17,581 STUDENTS
ACTIVE ON
HANDSHAKE

697 EMPLOYERS
ATTENDED
CAREER FAIR

1,320 ON-CAMPUS
INTERVIEWS

111,302 JOBS ON
HANDSHAKE

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

OU Alum Champions Diversity through Beauty Brands

BY DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Stepping foot into Kenya for the first time at 8 years old, Nyakio Kamoche Grieco learned that beauty products could be made by hand.

Grieco was there to meet her grandparents. She was already a fan of skincare and beauty, but something clicked when her grandmother taught her to make an exfoliant body scrub from hand-grown coffee beans and sugar cane.

Nineteen years later, with a business plan she created during her time at OU, she launched the body-scrub as the first product of her brand: Nyakio.

Now the founder and CEO of Thirteen Lune and Relevant, Grieco combines her roots and entrepreneurial vision to curate a more inclusive and diverse beauty industry.

“Beauty is connection,” Grieco said. “It’s a way to bring people together and to celebrate other cultures. Especially when we live in these divisive times, I look to beauty and culture as a way to connect us all and to see the beauty in one another.”

Growing up in Norman, Grieco spent a lot of time on OU’s campus, often with her father, Dr. Jidolph Kamoche, as he pioneered the African Studies program. Though she danced around what school to attend, she fell in love with the idea of experiencing campus as a student. She graduated with a business marketing degree in 1996.

“I didn’t know I would ultimately become an entrepreneur when I graduated,” Grieco said. “Having the ability to create companies and do projects analyzing existing companies really did end up planting that entrepreneurial seed.”

At OU, Grieco used career development resources to further her future. Not only did the career resources teach her how to write a resume, but it gave her the network she used to land jobs in Los Angeles.

“Everyone should absolutely take advantage of (the) career resources (on campus),” Grieco said. “Ask all the questions. Don’t be afraid. It is the best opportunity for preparation for the real world.”

Grieco later moved to Hollywood to work in the representation of different



OU alumna Nyakio Kamoche Grieco is the founder and CEO of beauty brands Thirteen Lune and Relevant. “I didn’t know I would ultimately become an entrepreneur when I graduated.”

actresses. Beauty products landed on her desk daily, many of them with ingredients sourced from Africa — yet the continent had a startling scarcity of recognition.

“When it came to premium beauty, nobody was really talking about Africa,” Grieco said. “I saw an opportunity to create a premium skincare brand celebrating the sophistication and the efficacy of ingredients in Africa, and I took it.”

Soon, Nyakio went from a brand Grieco sold out of her apartment to one in stores nationwide. To let the brand go further places, she sold it to Unilever in 2017 and continued working as the face of the brand for the next three years.

Grieco showed up on lists of top Black-owned brands to follow. Noticing a lack of recognition for other similar brands, Grieco knew something had to change. In June 2020, she began working on an inclusive beauty retail platform that launched December of the same year as Thirteen Lune. While building that brand, Grieco also created a skincare brand called Relevant.

“Being an entrepreneur is not for the faint of heart,” Grieco said. “There are good times, and there are hard times, but there

(must) always (be) that constant need, desire and challenge to keep going.”

A year after establishing Relevant, Cosmetic Executive Women honored Grieco with the 2023 Female Founder Award. Grieco said she owes a great deal of her success to OU, which is why, even though she’s lived in California longer, she tells people she’s from Oklahoma.

“That is a testament to the incredible upbringing community and loving souls that (the state) still feels like home to me,” Grieco said.

Through all of her start-ups and successes, OU has remained a special place in Grieco’s heart. She still takes trips with her sorority sisters from Kappa Kappa Gamma, guest lectures at Price College of Business and visits for as many football games as she can.

“I’m a sooner, through and through,” Grieco said. “(I have) the opportunity to carry forth the legacy (and) the power of the University of Oklahoma. Whether it’s the campus community or the businesses that surround the community, we’re all in it together.”

POST-GRADUATION SUPPORT AND SUCCESS

The OU Career Center is committed to supporting students beyond graduation and providing resources to help alumni navigate their professional journeys. Graduates can take advantage of career advising, networking opportunities, resume and cover letter reviews, and job search assistance to transition into the workforce or explore new career paths.

POST-GRADUATION PLANS SURVEY (PGPS) PARTICIPATION

The Post-Graduation Plans Survey (PGPS) collects essential data on where OU graduates go after completing their degrees. This information helps the university track employment trends, further education pursuits, and career outcomes to improve services for future students.

Graduating students:

- Complete the **Post-Graduation Plans Survey (PGPS)** through your **Graduate OU Canvas Course** as part of the final steps for degree completion.
- Faculty members are encouraged to highlight the importance of PGPS participation to track student success and improve career support programs.

For more information on post-graduation support, visit www.ou.edu/career/alumni, call (405) 325-1974, or email careercenter@ou.edu.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREER CENTER





THERE'S ONLY ONE STUDENT AFFAIRS

Advocacy and Education • Assessment and Planning • Campus Activities Council • Career Center •
Esports and Co-Curricular Innovation • Fitness + Recreation • Health Services •
Henderson Scholars • Housing and Residence Life • Leadership & Volunteerism • New Student
Programs • OU Advocates • OU Food Pantry • OU Health Campus • OU Policy Debate Team •
OU-Tulsa • Parent and Family Programs • President's Community Scholars •
President's Leadership Class • SafeRide • SafeWalk • Strategic Initiatives • Student Conduct •
Student Government Association • Student Legal Services • Student Life • Student Media •
Student Organization Services • Student Relief Fund • University Counseling Center



"Your greatest growth often happens beyond the classroom. At OU, Student Affairs helps you discover who you are, and who you're becoming, through every experience along the way."

David A. Surratt, Ed.D.
 Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students