OMA promotes campus diversity, inclusion

Individuals Making a Path Across Campus Towards Unity (IMPACT-U) is a volunteer program through the Office of Multicultural Affairs that is designed for students who are passionate about equality, diversity, social justice and desire to become more involved on campus.

These social justice advocates will be required to attend trainings held by the OMA professional staff, and as a result, they will be able to challenge and motivate students, faculty members and staff members to get involved and engage in conversations about various situations that affect marginalized groups. IMPACT-U students will also be able to present and participate in programs along with OMA student ambassadors, and they will be able to step in in the absence of an OMA student ambassador.

OMA's mission is to create a campus environment in which all students, staff and faculty feel welcome and included, according to Director of Multicultural Affairs Veronica Beavers. OMA creates networks of support for students, staff and faculty, providing opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural interactions and learning experiences that promote respect for diversity. In addition, the office staff works with student organizations to host cultural celebrations and activities that are educational and that work to enhance students' abilities to succeed in a global community.

OMA is much more than a physical location on campus; it hosts a spirit of family support and unity among the SFA community, she said. Those students who take advantage of the OMA resources will find mentors and lifelong friendships that will challenge and support their development as young adults.

OMA hosts student organizations such as the Lumberjack Cultural Association, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Organization of Latin Americans and LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus, just to name a few. Many of the cultural events throughout SFA's campus are developed through the OMA.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs' AXcel Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program exists to help first-year students get and stay connected to available resources, services and programs at SFA, easing their transition to college life.

The program emphasizes academic excellence, leadership, diversity and personal growth.

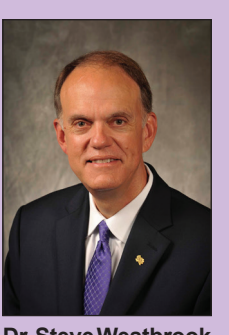
"First-year students are paired with current student leaders who exhibit a balance between academics and involvement. In addition, each student is also paired with an SFA faculty or staff mentor," she said.

For more information about OMA, visit www.sfasu.edu/oma, call (936) 468-1073 or email oma@sfasu.edu. New SFA students are encouraged to follow OMA on Twitter @SFAOMA, Instagram @omasfa1991 and "friend" OMA on Facebook to stay informed about upcoming events and activities.

Photo courtesy of the Office of Multicultural Affairs

SFA students pose for a photo during 2021 Diversity Week sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Lumberjack Cultural Association.

Westbrook serving as interim president



Dr. Steve Westbrook
Interim President

The Board of Regents recently appointed SFA alumnus and retired administrator Dr. Steve Westbrook to serve as the University's interim president until a permanent president assumes the office.

Westbrook addressed regents at their spring quarterly meeting, citing his long history with and love for the university as assurance that he's happy to be called upon to help where needed. He is coming out of retirement, he added, to help prepare the University for the upcoming legislative session and to offer guidance during the transition to a new president.

Westbrook, who was first employed by the University in 1981, served as vice president for university affairs from 2007 to 2020 and was the university's interim president following the death of former president Dr. Baker Pattillo. Since his retirement, Westbrook has continued to serve as an adjunct faculty member and in 2021 was designated by the regents as vice president for university affairs emeritus. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from SFA and earned a doctorate in higher education leadership from Texas A&M University - Commerce.

Former SFA president Dr. Scott Gordon and the university mutually agreed it was in the best interest of both parties for the employment relationship to end in mid-April. Gordon had served in the position since August 2019.

GRIFFITH: Expansion extending Griffith along North Street

From Page 1A

art gallery, multiple classrooms, rehearsal facilities, faculty offices and the offices of the College of Fine Arts dean. The facilities will house the ECFA's sound recording technology, filmmaking, theatre, dance and musical theatre programs.

Jessica DeWitt, assistant director of construction for the SFA Physical Plant and Griffith project manager, said that despite initial delays pertaining to weather and supply chain issues, the project remains on course.

"To everyone's credit, the project is still on track for its original completion dates and is expected to deliver all of the exciting new spaces as originally intended," DeWitt said. "We are looking at a March 2023 construction completion date followed by an extensive move-in period. Following a summer move-in, the building is expected to open for classes in Fall 2023."

DeWitt credited project management teams – KDW, Kirksey Architecture, Project Control, Physical Plant, SFA Design Center and ECFA staff – for working tirelessly over the last year to stay on top of schedule milestones and ahead of potential risks to maintain momentum.

"However, I believe the toughest challenges are in front of us," she said. "Last year was about specifications and selections that avoided hard-to-get materials. This year, there are pieces of equipment that are not available or manufacturers simply will not commit to making available by building opening. We are leaning hard on the flexibility I referenced last year, putting our heads together, reaching out to our sources, and tackling these issues every day."

Over the next year, the project management team will be "busy as ever," but the results will be hard to see from the outside, DeWitt said.

"Passersby now see an almost fully constructed new building and exterior improvements underway," she said. "The visual presence of large equipment and workers onsite is waning. However, this is not cause for concern, because more work than ever is ongoing inside the building."

Photo courtesy of the Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts

The new building should be open in time for SFA's 100th anniversary in 2023.

Help keep our Lumberjack Family healthy!

COVID-19 testing is available on campus by appointment. SFA students may make an appointment in mySFA under "Important Notifications."

WELCOME: Stop by dean's office in Rusk Building

From Page 1A

Ask for help. This is a simple tip, but probably the hardest to follow! Asking for help can be terrifying. It makes us vulnerable and humble. Both of these, by the way, are healthy emotions. There are so many resources here on campus to help you if you are struggling. From the Academic Assistance and Resource Center to the Student Outreach and Support office, to the brand-new Health and Wellness Hub (located in the former Health Clinic)—all of these resources, and so many more, are here for you. All you have to do is ask!

As my role as dean of students here at SFA, your success if my responsibility. If you are ever struggling, need someone to talk to, or just have a question and don't know where to go, then you should come find me! The Dean of Students Office is located on the third floor of the Rusk Building in the main lobby. We are here to help answer your questions or find someone who can. If you are struggling, we are here to lend a listening ear. We are here to help you navigate college life and all the ups and downs that come with that. I wish you the best of luck this year!

Axe 'em, Jacks!

We are here for you

The mission of the Stephen F. Austin State **University Police Department** is to provide a safe environment to all students, staff, faculty and guests through respectful, fair and equitable policing and community engagement. We strive to provide excellence, integrity and professional community interaction with our campus community.

UPD Services:

Escorts, vehicle assists, emergency call boxes and crime prevention programs.

Non-emergency line: 936.468.2608
Police Emergency: 936.468.9111
updemail@sfasu.edu

Parking Services:

Parking compliance on the SFA campus for faculty, staff, students and visitors.

Contact Peggy Brown for any concerns at 936.468.7275 or email sfaparking@sfasu.edu.

Emergency Management:

Guidance and response to all-hazard emergency situations on the SFA campus or that have the potential to affect campus.

Contact Jeremy Pickett at 936.468.1667 or email Jeremy.Pickett@sfasu.edu.