

Campus Update

U.S. Rep. delivered annual Watkins Lecture

United States Representative Tom Cole visited campus to deliver ECU's Annual Watkins Lecture to close out August 2025.

This year's lecture marked the 5th anniversary of the Native American Legal Clinic, a service offered in partnership between ECU Legal Studies and Oklahoma Indian Legal Services (OILS). OILS is funded by the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). Congressman Cole has been a strong supporter of LSC throughout his time in Congress. OILS attorneys and staff, including Director Stephanie Hudson, also attended the event.

The Watkins Lecture was created by Lou Watkins, chair of ECU's Political Science Department from 1980 to 1991, and wife of former U.S. Representative Wes Watkins. She is also a Distinguished Former Faculty award winner.



U.S. Representative Tom Cole

New faculty welcomed to campus



From left to right; Dr. Gilson Sanchez, Dr. Hayden Hays, Katie Goodson, Jenn Peek, Dr. Moshin Khan and Dr. He Wang. Not pictured, Dr. Alexandra Balasa.

SEE FACULTY PAGE 2

Enrollment up for third consecutive year

Currently, 3,607 students are enrolled for Fall 2025, representing a 9.2% increase from Fall 2024. Student credit hours have grown by 10.8% with concurrent student enrollment also seeing a significant rise.

These figures mark the highest total enrollment ECU has seen since 2019 and reflect a three-year upward trend.

Welcome Week at ECU!

SEE WELCOME, PAGE 4

Faculty

From Page 1

ECU announced seven new faculty members for the 2025-26 academic year.

Dr. Alexandra Balasa is an Instructor, in partnership with Seminole State College, for the Department of English and Languages. Balasa is a writer, educator and scholar with a B.S. in Psychology and English from the University of Toronto, an M.A. in Creative Writing from Edinburgh-Napier University, and a Ph.D. in Literature, with a dissertation in Creative Writing, from the University of Texas at Dallas.

Katie Goodson is an Instructor for the ECU School of Nursing. Goodson is a Registered Nurse (RN) with over a decade of experience in emergency and urgent care settings. She holds an Associate of Applied Science in Nursing from Murray State College and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from Galen College of Nursing in Louisville, Kentucky.

Dr. Hayden Hays is an Assistant Professor for the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. Hays is an Aquatic Ecologist and Biological Science professional. He holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences from Colorado State University, an M.S. in Biological Sciences from Sam Houston State University and a Ph.D. in Aquatic Ecology from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

Dr. Moshin Khan is an Assistant Professor for the Department of Politics, Law and Society. Khan is a Scholar, Social entrepreneur, and Development practitioner. He holds a Ph.D. in Sociology, Ph.D. (ABD) in Public Policy, Master's degree in Development Policy (Development Economics), an MPhil in Rural Development, a B.Sc. (Hons) in Agriculture.

Jenn Peek is an Assistant Professor for the Department of Art + Design : Media + Communication. Peek is a multidisciplinary artist who earned her BFA from the University of North Florida and her MFA from the University of Oklahoma, both with concentrations in Sculpture.

Dr. Gilson Sanchez is an Assistant Professor for the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. Sanchez is a genomics scientist specializing in bioinformatics. He earned a B.S. in Cell and Molecular Biology with an emphasis on transcription regulation from the University of California, Riverside, and a Ph.D. in Chemistry and Biochemistry from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Dr. He Wang is an Assistant Professor for the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. Wang is an educator and lecturer who holds a Medical Degree for Public Health Physicians from Baotou Medical College, a Master of Medicine with an Occupational Health Concentration from Shandong Institute of Sciences and a Ph.D. in Environmental Health from the University of Sydney in Australia.

Employee Spotlight



Chandra Miller

Chandra is the current Director of Purchasing on the ECU campus.

She began her career as Senior Office Assistant-Purchasing at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology in Okmulgee. During her time at OSUIT she also served as an Accounts Receivable Clerk in the Bursar's Office, and later as Director of Purchasing for 12 years before joining ECU. She has now been with ECU more than six years.

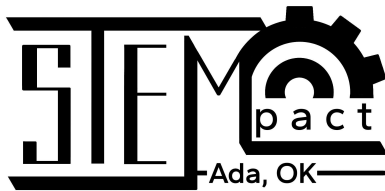
Chandra earned a Master's degree from Oklahoma State University-Tulsa, a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Langston University-Tulsa, and an Associate's degree from Seminole State College.

According to Vice President of Administration and Finance, Darrell Morrison, "Chandra Miller, is truly an unsung hero of our university. Her exemplary work and unwavering dedication often go unnoticed, but her impact is felt every day. Her commitment and hard work exemplify what it means to be a valuable team member; we are grateful for all she does to support our community."



ECU's EOC Expands Free Services for Adult Learners in Local Communities

The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) is a federally funded TRIO program proudly serving adult learners since 1991. The EOC is expanding its free services with new partnerships to reach more individuals in the community. The EOC program primarily serves low-income, first-generation, or displaced adults. All services are free to eligible participants. For more information, visit ecok.edu/news.



STEMpact, a new, free monthly community project aimed at encouraging and training youth in STEM, recently launched with a kickoff event on the ECU campus and hosted by ECU Tiger Esports.

The university has partnered with organizations such as GrowAda, Youth Connect Club, KidWind and other STEM organizations to boost STEM-related activities in the community for students grades fifth through eighth.

Each month, a different STEM organization in Ada will host its own STEMpact event for the community.

ECU Tiger Esports is scheduled to host the first monthly STEMpact event on campus in September.



August came to a close with a milestone for dozens of ECU nursing students, who were honored during the traditional White Coat Ceremony. Dr. Jeffrey Gibson, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Dr. Kenneth Andrews, Dean of the College of Health and Sciences, joined School of Nursing faculty, students, and their families to mark the occasion.

Roary chatbot launched campus-wide

ECU's new behaviorally smart SMS chatbot "Roary the Chatbot" launched on Wednesday, August 20.

Roary is a 24/7 chatbot designed to help support students in need of assistance at all hours.

Since its launch, students have engaged Roary over 3,100 and through this engagement, ECU has been able to identify students who may need additional support in order to direct them to support systems across campus.



Lucas Bauduin, international student from ECU's sister-university in Limoges, France, arrived on campus in August. He is slated to spend one full academic year at ECU studying Business Management.

Semester kicked off with Convocation

A Faculty and Staff Convocation marked the start of the 2025-26 academic year for ECU employees as ECU's President Wendell Godwin and ECU's Administration discussed a number of topics such as the ECU Forward Capital Campaign, ongoing construction on the Dan Hays STEM Center, renovations across campus, ECU's First-Generation initiative, and much more.



Welcome Week across campus



ECU Tiger Football offered their services as ECU's own move-in crew during move-in day.



ECU professor Dr. Joshua Grasso helps his son, Eli, on moving day.



Sweet Treat Thursday



ECU Mall Crawl fills the plaza in front of the Linscheid Library.



New freshmen came out to Meet the Greeks on the University lawn in front of the Bill S. Cole University Center.



Students participate in a Welcome Week Hypnotist Show.

Welcome Week across campus cont'd



Kerr Activities Center's Welcome to the Dome filled the stands.



Students had a blast at the Welcome Week Slide & Vibe.



Lucky Tiger Bingo packed the Estep Multimedia Center and saw amazing prizes go out to a number of lucky Tigers.

Welcome Week Honors events



ECU Honors Society for the 2025-26 academic year.



Students and Faculty participate in the traditional Honors March, leading to Honors Convocation.

ECU alumni gathered for a reunion in OKC this August



ECU poets invited to Woody Guthrie Center



Local poets, Dr. Ken Hada and Cody Baggerly, both employees with ECU, were recently invited to present at a poetry event held at the Woody Guthrie Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma.



Stickballs returns to campus with upcoming dates listed on the ECU calendar.



Nemo, ECU's registered therapy dog and the centerpiece of the Linscheid Library's ongoing "Paws and Relax" event, has been named one of 30 finalists from more than 4,000 video audition submissions for an upcoming Air Bud project.

Nemo's best friend and owner is Bridget Hilburn of ECU's McNair Scholars Program.

Photo credit: Alisha Anderson Design.

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 2
 - Honors Sorting Hat Ceremony, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 3
 - Paws and Relax, 1 p.m.
- Sept. 4
 - SGA Meeting, 6 p.m.
 - Football vs. Oklahoma Baptist University, 7 p.m.
- Sept. 8
 - Ada Area Wide College Fair, 11:30 a.m.
 - ECU Faculty Concert, 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 10
 - Paws and Relax, 4 p.m.
- Sept. 11
 - Commemorating a National Tragedy: Monuments, Memorials, and Public Remembrance, 3:30 p.m.
 - The Hunting Ground, 6 p.m.
 - SGA Meeting, 6 p.m.
- Sept. 15
 - Retiree Brunch, 8:30 a.m.
- Sept. 16
 - Volleyball vs. Northwestern OK, 6 p.m.
- Sept. 17
 - ECU Blood Drive, 10 a.m.
 - Stickball on the Lawn, 12:30 p.m.
 - Paws and Relax, 5:10 p.m.
- Sept. 18 - 20
 - ECU Showtime Presents: Fearing the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 20
 - Step Out of the Darkness, 10:30 a.m.

ECU student goes international with leading esports organization Gen.G

By Maia Clark, ECU Student, and Cody Baggerly

In April of 2025, East Central University senior Maia Clark took her passion for competitive esports to the next level, collaborating with Gen.G and McDonald's Gaming for the prestigious Gaming Leaders of Tomorrow program.

Along with four other students selected from the Southern Plains region of the United States, Clark worked to plan an esports event with a \$10,000 budget. The event, hosted at Wichita State University, featured several booths dedicated to showcasing the history of esports, equipped with retro consoles such as the Super Nintendo Entertainment System and Sega Genesis, offering attendees the opportunity to interact with technological relics in a fun and tactile way.

"It was a lot of fun," said Clark of her experience, adding, "it taught me a lot about the esports industry and gave me the opportunity to work with professionals in the field of esports education and outreach,

which is something I am very passionate about."

Following the Gaming Leaders of Tomorrow event, Clark was extended the opportunity to attend the Esports World Cup hosted in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia as a part of the Gen.G Superfan program. At EWC, she had the opportunity to witness chess legends such as Magnus Carlsen, Hikaru Nakamura, and Arjun Erigaisi compete for the Grand Champion title. "It was surreal," she comments, "seeing the greatest chess players in the world in their element, only a few feet away."

And of her experience serving alongside other students representing Gen.G, she remarked, "I was endlessly inspired by my colleagues; they were passionate, creative, brilliant... Some were storytellers or players themselves. It is humbling to know that we all come from somewhere, and we all share this desire to make our mark on this industry in unique ways."

Clark plans to continue her esports

involvement through Gen.G this December, as she was accepted into the Gen.G Practicum Abroad program, which offers selected students the chance to travel to Gen.G's headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, for a three-week, esports-career-focused educational course. A representative from Gen.G noted, "[I'm]

excited to see [her] continue to perform great, and do more projects in the future."


Having traveled from Wichita to Riyadh, along with plans to take her love of gaming to Seoul, Clark hopes to continue shaping the future of esports, both as a competitor and as a creative professional."



Clark and others outside the EWC Center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Image of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, captured by Clark.



FEARING THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY VICKIE REIFSNIDER
MUSIC BY RUDY LUPINSKI
LYRICS BY VICKIE REIFSNIDER
CHOREOGRAPHY BY DARICE STRICKLAND
SHELBY DAVIS

ECU SHOWTIME

ATALOA THEATRE
SEPTEMBER 18 - 20 @ 7:30 P.M.

TICKETS:
ADULTS - \$10
CHILDREN - \$5
FREE - WITH ECU ID

ECU PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT
PRESENTS THE



FACULTY SHOWCASE
concert



FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

SEP. 8TH

7:30 P.M.

ATALOA THEATER
920 E. MAIN ST., ADA, OK

FEATURED PERFORMERS:
GRAYSON RUSHING, MELODY BAGGECH, DOUG LARAMORE, FARREN ROWAN, CHRISTOPHER MARTIN, NATHANIEL BERMAN, ALEXANDRA AGUIRRE, ALEX AGUIRRE-BERMAN, NICHOLAUS MEYERS, JUSTIN LEWIS

ECU

EAST CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
HOMECOMING

REGISTRATION INCLUDES
HOMECOMING T-SHIRT AND FINISHER MEDAL

5K FUN RUN



\$35 ADMISSION

LET'S RUN, WALK AND ROAR INTO HOMECOMING!

SATURDAY OCT 18, 2025
REGISTRATION AT 7:30AM
START AT 8:00AM



PRE-REGISTER ONLINE

WINTERSMITH PARK
1800 S SCENIC DR
ADA, OK 74820
WWW.ECOK.EDU/2025HC
*T-SHIRT AND MEDAL AVAILABLE AS SUPPLIES LAST



RINGMASTER ROARY'S BIG TOP BASH

HOMECOMING 2025
OCTOBER 17 & 18



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