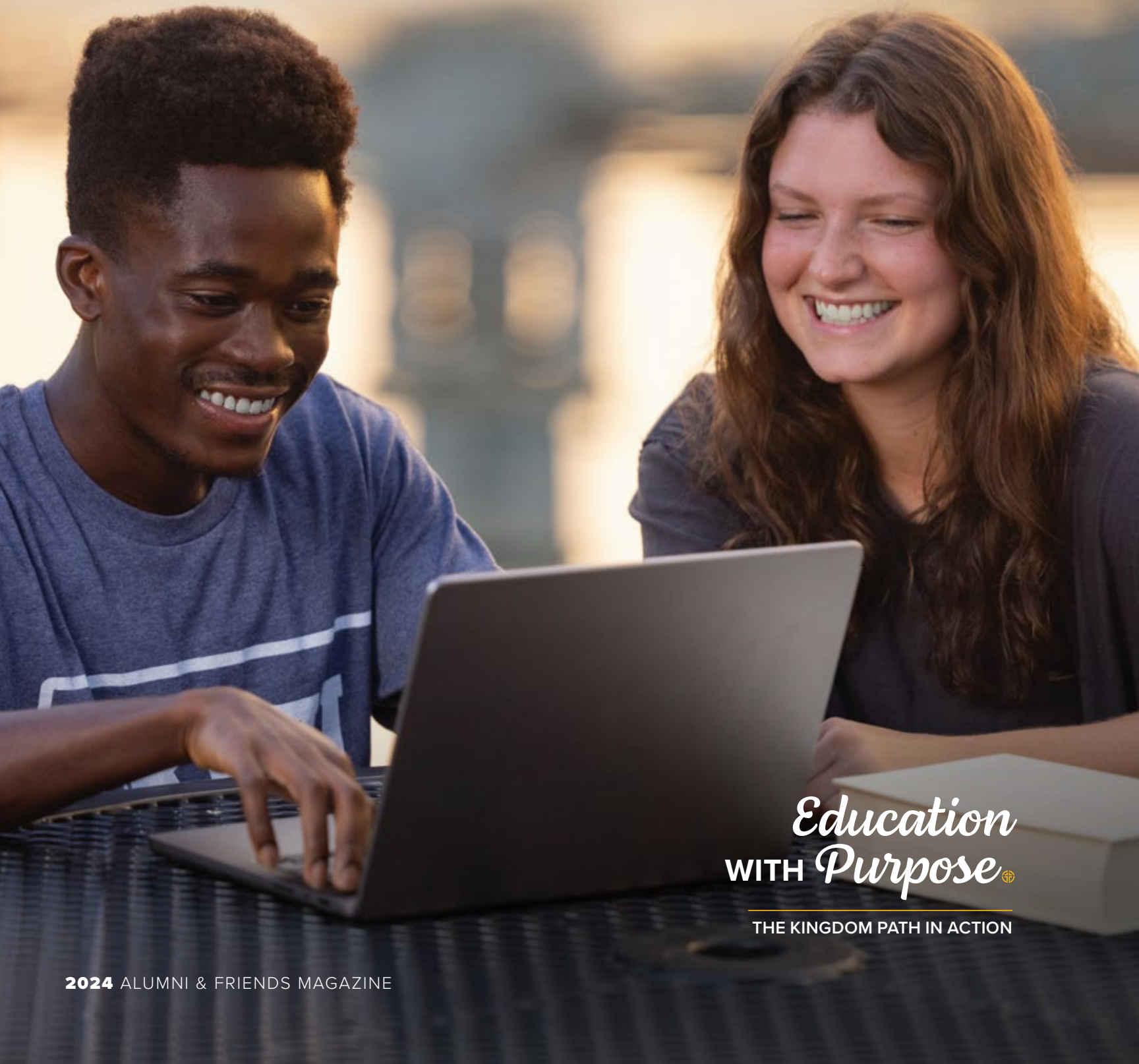


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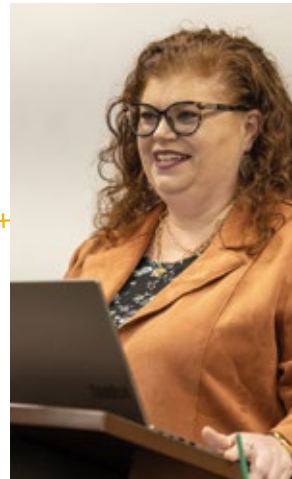
OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY



Education
WITH *Purpose* 

THE KINGDOM PATH IN ACTION

Be One SENT



Oklahoma Wesleyan University is a biblically centered university that exists to develop and send **servant leaders** to advance the Kingdom of God.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Unique Education OKWU Offers

Our mission is clear: Oklahoma Wesleyan University is a biblically centered university that exists to develop and send servant leaders to advance the Kingdom of God.

We grow and mature students in an ethos that is unique compared to other schools. The investment that parents make in raising their children is far too valuable to throw to the wind when they go off to college. This is precisely why schools like OKWU are needed in today's church, culture, and world.

The saying is true: "It is **not** whether you are being formed, but **who** or **what** is forming you."

God's word is the foundation of everything we do. We are biblically centered. In a day when people, institutions, governments, and even some denominations have lost their way, Oklahoma Wesleyan will always stay true and follow God's inerrant and authoritative word. It is our source. It is our roadmap. We develop every program we offer, whether academic, spiritual, or athletic, with one question in mind: How does this model and meet the standard of God's word?

We educate students to think critically. Our world needs individuals who know how to discern what is true. The faculty of OKWU help our students know God's truth through the pathway traditionally known as a liberal arts education. This means that students in every academic major take a holistic course load. We want our students to be developed for the calling God has for their lives and to be able to discuss what is happening in history, current events, and cultural trends through a biblical lens not taught at many universities.

The students at Oklahoma Wesleyan University are trained in excellence. Our faculty are deeply dedicated to serving as unto Jesus Christ. They challenge our students to "...grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with people" (1 Samuel 2:26). They are also well-trained. In the ten-year reaffirmation of our accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission last year, our evaluators were impressed with our faculty's faith, scholarship, and teaching prowess. I have heard it said that an education at a Christian university is inferior to that of a secular university. We can prove that this statement is false. As I walk our campus, I am continually reminded that it is my honor to serve the Lord in the middle of such outstanding scholarship.

The saying is true: "It is not whether you are being formed, but who or what is forming you." Shaping lives into the likeness of Christ is the greatest privilege we have at Oklahoma Wesleyan University.

Educating the mind is such an important part of this process. In fact, as we focus on the concept of sending servant leaders from OKWU to advance the Kingdom of God, we often refer to the word SENT:

- Servant Leadership
- Education
- Needed
- Transformation

For the transformation of all. 🌐

Dr. Jim Dunn, President
Oklahoma Wesleyan University





VISION

THE NOW CAMPAIGN IMPACT

Campus Renaissance in Progress

In just two years, Oklahoma Wesleyan University has witnessed remarkable transformations through the NOW Campaign—a bold journey to raise **\$68 million by 2030**. Highlights of the Campus Renaissance initiative include the fully-funded renovation of Wesley Hall (aerial photo shown), expanded parking, and the upcoming ground-breaking on Eagle Village apartments.

Be a part of this historic transformation — explore our projects and contribute to shaping the future of OKWU. Discover more about our initiatives and get involved in advancing our university today.

www.okwu.edu/now

“Our campus reflects **significant progress** in just two years, driven by the **remarkable response** from **alumni and friends.**”

– Dr. Jim Dunn



Expanding Our Influence:

1 The **Wesley Hall** renovation project was fully-funded in less than six months. Construction crews have been at work all summer readying extensive improvements for residents this fall. **Colaw Hall** also received a new roof and updates during the summer of 2024.

2 In March 2024, OKWU completed the renovation of **Mission Lodge**, formerly known as the Buell House. This retreat center and event venue now blends mid-century modern elegance with the hospitality of the pioneer spirit, offering unique architecture in every room. Mission Lodge provides an inviting atmosphere for university guests and community events. The 1948 ranch home, designed by renowned architect Charles Dilbeck, features newly renovated deluxe rooms, conference spaces, and ample living areas. OKWU extends heartfelt thanks to *The Parsons Foundation* for their vital financial contribution in breathing new life into this historic gem.

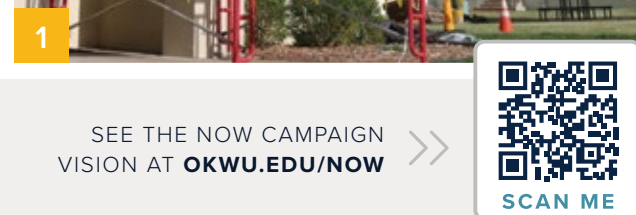
3 **The Eagle Village Apartments** will mark the expansion of residential housing with the ground breaking on the first of eight buildings in fall 2024. This multi-residential housing project envisions a community-centric design, located on Silver Lake Road across from campus. Each apartment includes 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and a common living room, kitchen, and laundry area. The increased independence for upper-division students prepares them for life after college.

All told, we have raised more than **\$10 million** toward our NOW Campaign goals. As we look toward the next 12 months, we are aiming to make significant progress on the **Eagle Campus Expansion**, in particular the



Campus Renaissance Launch
(Above) The Board of Trustees meeting in March 2024 officially kicked off the Wesley Hall renovations with remarks from President Dunn.

Dorm Renovations
Colaw Hall received a new roof and lobby updates, reopening in the fall of 2024.



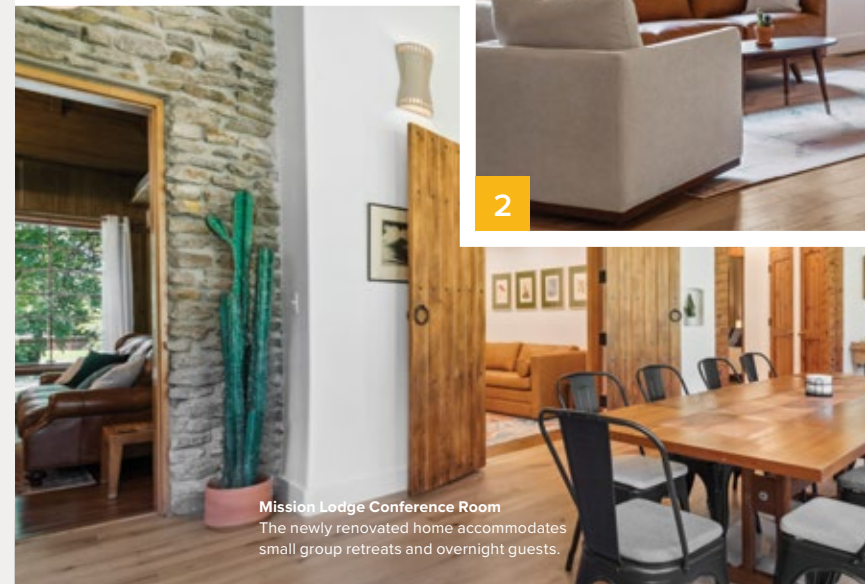
SEE THE NOW CAMPAIGN VISION AT [OKWU.EDU/NOW](https://www.okwu.edu/now)



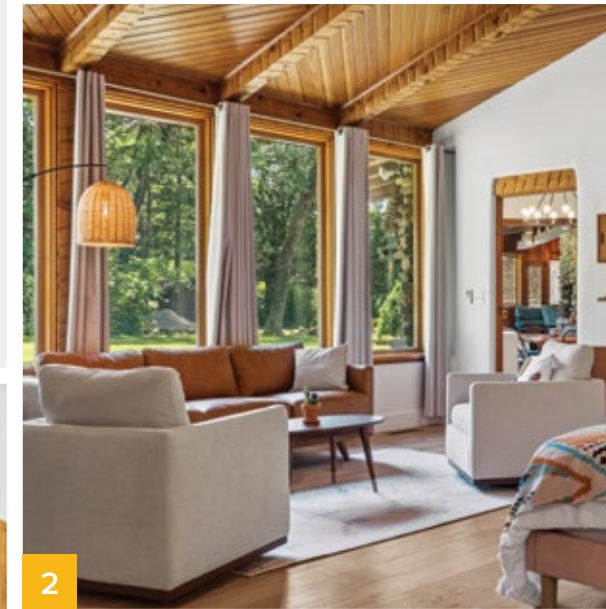
SCAN ME

necessary **Track and Field** facilities that will allow us to jumpstart our plans to renovate and expand our athletic fields. It will continue to take the entire OKWU community coming together to make this vision a reality.

Consider making a giving plan by visiting our website to learn more about the NOW Campaign projects and how you can be involved. 🙏



Mission Lodge Conference Room
The newly renovated home accommodates small group retreats and overnight guests.



Rendering of Eagle Village
Residents will enjoy suite-style living with a shared living space and full on-suite bathrooms.

TOWER

OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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www.okwu.edu/tower

ADVANCING THE KINGDOM

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”
Matthew 6:33 NLT

The mission of Oklahoma Wesleyan University is to develop and send servant leaders to advance the Kingdom of God. We model a biblically centered way of thought, life, and faith as a vital part of The Wesleyan Church. Through deliberate study, honest questions, and critical engagement, we foster a vibrant liberal arts community that upholds the Primacy of Jesus Christ, the Priority of Scripture, the Pursuit of Truth, and the Practice of Wisdom.

Living the Kingdom Path

The Kingdom Path is both a mission and a way of life, guiding our community to grow as servant leaders who advance the Kingdom of God. This journey is rooted in the teachings and life of Jesus Christ, emphasizing a biblically centered approach to thought, life, and faith. We are SENT on the Kingdom Path:

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”
– Matthew 6:33 NLT

Servanthood

We serve others with Christlike love and respect.

Education

We pursue learning through a biblical worldview to fulfill our unique calling.

Needed

We prioritize authentic community because everyone matters in God’s Kingdom.

Transformation

We demonstrate love and truth as we are renewed by God’s grace. ☪



STUDENT STORY



A Dream Fulfilled

BY DR. SHARON WILLIS ('23)

As a girl, I had the dream of becoming a nurse like Clara Barton or Florence Nightingale. At the same time, I also dreamed of becoming a mother – a strong desire to live out my own story of *Cheaper by the Dozen*. Neither goal came easily.

Nursing school was challenging, but I knew it was worth all the blood, sweat, and tears – nursing is one of the greatest careers! My quest to become a mother was an even greater challenge; we went through several long years of infertility. I was not given much hope that I would ever have a baby, so I decided to go back to school to

become a medical doctor. Just months later, our prayers were answered when I found out I was pregnant. In that moment, I felt God telling me that I should not pursue medical school. He told me to pour my efforts of motherhood into the life of the children He would give me, and that someday our first child would fulfill my dreams and become a doctor. I followed God's will and dedicated myself to motherhood; along the way, God blessed us with three more amazing sons! As they grew up, I worked as a part-time nurse, but I always put my family and their needs first.

GOD IS FAITHFUL

My journey to the Doctor of Nursing Practice in Executive Leadership (DNP) was challenging. There were times I thought it was going to be impossible to achieve during this season of my life. I had given up hope until a dear friend and fellow classmate, Dr. Rebecca Poore, grabbed my arm and told me, "We're going to enroll in a DNP program together!"

Along the way, God provided the finances, wisdom, guidance, favor, and open doors I needed at each step of the journey. Over my two years in the program, I grew immensely in the nursing profession and gained so much practical knowledge in the field. My studies affirmed my desire to stay a lifelong learner, no matter how old I get. Through the courses, I gained valuable knowledge I utilize in my current role as a nursing professor at the University of Tulsa. My passion is to train and empower the next generation of nurses.

I am so grateful for the spiritual worldview at OKWU. The OKWU Department of Nursing has been built on the foundation of Christ and His ministry to heal individuals, communities, and nations. When I told the nursing administration of a desire to implement my DNP Quality Improvement project in Ghana, they were very supportive. In the summer of

“The OKWU Department of Nursing has been built on the foundation of Christ and His ministry to heal individuals, communities, and nations.”

2023, two of my classmates and I spent three weeks working at a mission hospital in Ghana, where we implemented what we were learning in our classes. It was truly a life-changing experience for which I will be forever grateful.

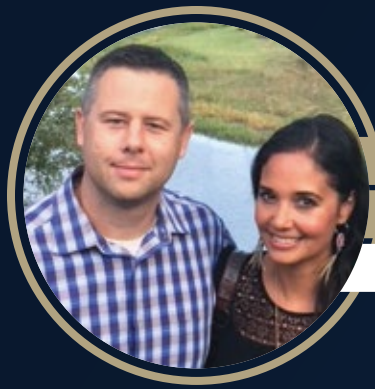
In December 2023, I received a doctoral degree 39 years after God's promise. My firstborn son is now a successful dentist, and my third son and his wife are medical doctors. God always does more than we can ask or dream! I have experienced His faithfulness at every step, in every class, and every moment that led to me completing the program and officially becoming Dr. Sharon Willis. 🙏



WILLIS ('23) SPENT THREE WEEKS WORKING AT A MISSION HOSPITAL IN GHANA.

LEARN ABOUT OKWU'S DNP PROGRAM AT [OKWU.EDU/DNP](https://okwu.edu/dnp)

2024 Outstanding Alumni Awards



**TATTON & JESSICA
MANNING**

ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

This award recognizes an individual or individuals who advance the Kingdom of God through noteworthy, long-term accomplishment in professional endeavors, significant service to the church, and a positive impact in the lives of others.

Tatton ('02) and Jessica (Riemenschneider, '02) Manning are the 2024 Alumni of the Year!

Tatton grew up in small-town Oklahoma and chose OKWU after a campus visit initiated by the baseball coach. He was not a believer at the time, but he liked what campus was all about.

Jessica grew up in Austin, Texas, and attended a Wesleyan church. As a high school student, she visited OKWU. Even though she wasn't sure about going to college in such a small town, she eventually decided that it was the best choice for her.

After his sophomore year, Tatton made the decision to follow Christ. He was influenced greatly by the many believers he was surrounded by. Tatton and Jessica started dating shortly after this, were engaged in September 2002, and got married in the summer of 2003.

Tatton majored in business administration, while Jessica earned her degree in behavioral science.

Following their time at OKWU, Tatton began working at a car dealership. In 2005, he joined the Army, where he served a tour in Afghanistan. In 2009, he finished his stint in the military, and the couple moved to Tulsa, where Tatton pursued his

MBA. Jessica, who earned a graduate degree from the University of Texas, worked in the behavioral health field for several years before the couple started growing their family. As the children came, she shifted to a stay-at-home mom role. She also homeschooled them when the time came.

In 2014 the couple returned to Bartlesville to launch Patriot Auto Group. Over the last ten years, their business has grown to include eight different stores across northeast Oklahoma, including two in Bartlesville.

The Mannings are known for their philanthropic endeavors in the Bartlesville community, both as individuals and through Patriot Auto Group. Every year, Patriot gives away four cars as part of their Student of the Year program, and the Mannings are dedicated supporters of their alma mater and other causes throughout Bartlesville. This belief in investing in others is rooted in a specific experience Jessica had while she was a student.

She received a scholarship between her sophomore and junior year that made it possible for her to return to Bartlesville. Someone's generosity at that time allowed her to stay at BWC, and the couple has made a point of giving back as the years have gone on.

Tatton and Jessica Manning live in Bartlesville with their four children: Elianna, Avi, Tatton, and Jett.



**MANDY
BLAIN**

YOUNG ALUMNUS AWARD

This award is given to an individual under 40 who displays distinguished leadership in his or her field and shows promise of future growth professionally and personally.

Mandy (Muncy, '14) Blain is the 2024 Young Alumnus of the Year!

Blain is an ER nurse at Jane Phillips Medical Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, where she has worked since her graduation.

Blain grew up in North Texas and dreamed of playing college volleyball. She also had a vision of becoming a nurse, but many of the schools she looked at wouldn't let her play volleyball and enroll in the nursing program, due to the high workload. OKWU was unique in that it was willing to let her do both. After a tryout, the coach prayed with Blain and her family. A few weeks later, when the coach called with an offer, Blain accepted right away.

Blain faced many struggles as a student, as she had multiple hours of practice every day on top of intense classes. While it wasn't always easy, through her hard work and the support of her professors and friends, Blain was able to accomplish her goals. Her impressive volleyball career included over 1,000 kills and more than 1,500 digs. She also met her husband, Andrew ('13), while at OKWU.

In recognition for their courage, achievement, and commitment to OKWU's vision and mission, we proudly present this year's Alumni Awards.



Blain graduated in 2014. As a student, she worked an externship in the emergency room at Jane Phillips. During her final year of college, she continued to work there. After she graduated and passed her NCLEX exam, Blain was hired full-time. She has spent the past 10 years working in the ER.

With God's provision and her own determination, Blain is living the dream she felt back as a high school student, serving others in their time of need by being a nurse who listens and cares for her patients. She is a shining example of what OKWU's Department of Nursing is all about: the foundation of Christ and His ministry to heal individuals, communities, and nations.

Mandy and Andrew Blain live in Bartlesville with their children: Harper (5), Hudson (3), and Hawkins (1).

READ FULL LENGTH STORIES AT [OKWU.EDU/TOWER](https://www.okwu.edu/tower)



PHIL & BETTY LOU HARRIS
HALL OF FAITH

This honor is awarded to an alumnus who is currently or has been in full-time, long-term Christian ministry and has demonstrated faithful, consistent service throughout that time.

Phil (MWC '67) and Betty Lou (MWC '65) Harris are the recipients of the 2024 Hall of Faith Award. They have more than five decades of ministry in the Wesleyan Church, and it all stems from their experience as students at Miltonvale Wesleyan College in the 1960s.

The couple met during their freshman year. Both were invested fully into their Miltonvale experience. Phil preached on the MWC gospel teams, sometimes serving at one church for Sunday morning service and another for Sunday evening services. Betty Lou was a member of a gospel trio, traveling to different churches and singing in services.

Betty Lou earned her associate's degree in two years before transferring to Marion College. Phil finished up his degree at Miltonvale. They both graduated in 1967 and were married that July.

The couple moved to Kentucky, where Phil worked on his master's degree at Asbury. While there, the couple also worked at a church in Lexington. When their time at Asbury was finished, they moved to a suburb of Buffalo, New York, where Phil was called to plant a church. Betty Lou worked on a Master of Library Science degree.

During their six years in New York, the couple had two children: Kari Jo and Scott. They also planted a church and developed a thriving small

group ministry. Sometimes they'd have more people attend home groups during the week than they would have at Sunday morning services.

After New York, the family moved back to Kansas. They pastored churches in Lakin and Kansas City before starting a church plant in Overland Park. Again they relied on their small group ministry to grow the church, including Kids' Klub. Each week, the couple welcomed 70 or more children into their home.

God opened the door for Phil to serve as District Superintendent, first for Kansas for two years and then for the Colorado-Nebraska District. He spent 19 years as DS of Colorado-Nebraska.

His focus as DS was to equip the churches in his district with the tools they needed to represent God well in their communities. This included a push to upgrade technology and equipment at every church.

In addition to their ministry work, Phil has served on the Oklahoma Wesleyan University Board of Trustees for 35 years, including 20 years as board secretary. This position meant that he signed diplomas for hundreds of OKWU graduates.

Since retiring from the DS role, the Harrises returned to pastoral ministry and continue to serve others. Together they have dedicated 57 years to ministry and impacted thousands of lives across many miles.

Phil and Betty Lou Harris currently reside in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.



VAL CALLAGHAN
ONE ANOTHER AWARD

This honor recognizes an alumnus who has actively served others in some capacity for at least five years, advancing Christ's Kingdom through compassion and exemplary commitment of time, talent, and treasure.

Val (Lehman, '91) Callaghan is the recipient of the 2024 One Another Award!

Callaghan was born to missionary parents in Swaziland. She spent the first ten years of her life in Swaziland before her family moved to a suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa. She lived there until she came to the States for college. With the exception of furloughs to the United States, Callaghan completed her early schooling in Africa.

Callaghan had family roots in Bartlesville. Her parents graduated from Central Pilgrim College, and she had extended family who called Bartlesville home. When the time came to choose a college, Callaghan's connections to Bartlesville made BWC the right choice for her.

Callaghan majored in intercultural ministry. She loved her experience living overseas on the mission field and dreamed of returning after finishing school. As a student, she participated in BWC mission trips, including a trip to Munich, where she worked with Ken and Marilyn Blake.

Although she originally hoped to return to the mission field after college, God opened up different doors of ministry. A few years after she graduated, she returned to BWC to work in the enrollment office. Along the way, she got married, and in 1995 she gave birth to her first child.

She was a stay-at-home mom for several years and helped her husband's contractor business by keeping the books and doing clerical work. In 2003, with her children now in school, she became an adjunct professor in OKWU's ESL program. She spent time working with students who were coming to OKWU from other countries and needed to hone their English skills before they entered composition courses.

In 2008, she started working full-time at The Center (otherwise known as the Bartlesville Community Center), where she still works as managing director. She serves as the point person for the team, reporting directly to the trust authority that manages The Center.

Her favorite part of her position is working with agents in New York to determine which Broadway shows come for The Center's *Broadway in Bartlesville!* series. The Center provides a variety of cultural and music events for people in Bartlesville to enjoy, including the OKM Music Festival, the Bartlesville Symphony Orchestra, and Children's Musical Theatre.

Although she may not have predicted all the steps that her journey has taken since her time as a student, Callaghan's commitment to serving her community is evident. As a mother, teacher, and now community leader, Callaghan has a long history of positively impacting the lives of others.

Val Callaghan lives in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.



Photo credit: Andy Dossett

ALUMNI AWARDS



**PHIL
NETTLETON**

HERITAGE ALUMNI AWARD

This award is given to an alumnus of Miltonvale Wesleyan College or Central Pilgrim College who displays significant service to others, distinguished leadership, noteworthy accomplishments, and a positive impact on the lives of others.

Phil Nettleton (CPC '66) is a recipient of the 2024 Heritage Alumni Award!

Nettleton grew up as the son of a pastor, moving around quite a bit in his youth. As a junior in high school, Nettleton and his father visited his older sisters at Central Pilgrim College in Bartlesville. Nettleton, who already felt called to ministry, felt confident that CPC was the right choice for him too. He attended his senior year of high school at Central Pilgrim before enrolling as a freshman in the fall of 1962.

Nettleton majored in Religion/Philosophy, met his future wife, Lucille, and developed a love for ministry that he carried through the decades.

In September 1966, Phil and Lucille married and moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, where Lucille was set to finish her degree in elementary education. After two years, they moved to Sylmar, California for a pastorate. This was followed by two years in Colorado Springs. In 1975, the Nettleton family of four moved to Pasadena, California, where they remained for seven years.

Nettleton had always felt drawn to international missions, and as a college student he was part of a missions trip to Kingstown, Jamaica, with his quartet. In 1982, Nettleton, his wife, and their two sons

moved to Papua New Guinea. This was the first step in what became 32 years of missions ministry, including ten years working stateside at the headquarters of Global Partners.

All told, Phil and Lucille lived and served in five countries – Papua New Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guyana, and the Czech Republic. Their time in Czech Republic came after their years at headquarters and was unique. They served in a pastoral role for missionaries in Europe, North Africa, and Central Asia. In total, Nettleton has been to 70 countries. He and Lucille retired from Global Partners in 2014, but they continue to serve others. Nettleton has been involved in prison ministry, and the couple is now part of a church plant team in the Indianapolis area.

After years overseas, the Nettletons enjoy being closer to their grandchildren. The couple lives near two of their three sons in Indiana. They continue to love traveling, spending quite a bit of time visiting with their many friends and family spread across the US.

Nettleton resides in Westfield, Indiana, with his wife, Lucille.



Phil Nettleton (CPC '66) with his wife Lucille and granddaughter Ariela Nettleton ('24).



**DON
DAAKE**

HERITAGE ALUMNI AWARD

This award is given to an alumnus of Miltonvale Wesleyan College or Central Pilgrim College who displays significant service to others, distinguished leadership, noteworthy accomplishments, and a positive impact on the lives of others.

Dr. Don Daake (MWC '71) is a recipient of the 2024 Heritage Alumni Award! He has had an expansive career in education, business, and consulting, one that has taken him all over the world.

However, it all started at Miltonvale Wesleyan College, where Daake attended his first two years from 1969-71.

Daake grew up in Charles City, Iowa. He and his family attended the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and singing groups from Miltonvale frequently would visit to put on performances. Daake's two older brothers, Richard and Robert, both began their college years at MWC, and Daake followed in their footsteps when the time came.

Daake earned his associate's degree from MWC, and he credits his time at MWC with preparing him for success. After wrapping up at MWC, he transferred to Kansas State and finished his undergraduate degree in history. Daake went on to earn his MBA from the University of Iowa.

In 1979, after some time working for Winnebago Industries, Daake took a job at Eastern Iowa Community College. There he worked mainly with students taking non-credit professional development courses. Daake also found himself in the classroom teaching undergraduate courses.

In 1986, an opportunity arose at Florida State University. Daake and his family had always wanted to live in Florida, so they moved to Tallahassee, where he served as the Director of Business and Industry Programming at Florida State's Center for Professional Development.

After four years, Daake decided to pursue a PhD. He enrolled in Florida State's College of Business, and over the next five years, he earned his PhD and worked as an instructor/researcher at the business school.

Daake finished his doctorate and took a position at Olivet Nazarene University, where his wife had earned her degree. They moved to Illinois in 1995, and Daake would serve at Olivet for the next 23 years as a professor of business.

In 2001, Olivet opened the Donald H. Weber Entrepreneur & Leadership Center and named Daake the Weber Center's first director. From 2001 to 2016, he continued to teach classes and led community outreach programs through the Weber Center. He facilitated programs and brought in business leaders to come and speak to students. In 2010, Daake was named Faculty Member of the Year, and in 2017, he was awarded the Richard Jones Teaching Excellence Award. He retired from full-time teaching in 2017, though he continues to be involved in his work as an adjunct professor at the DBA program run by Anderson University, which he started doing in 2004.

For the last 15 years, Daake has been a contributing writer to the Kankakee Daily Journal, writing columns on topics including business, values and ethics, emotional intelligence, and other pertinent issues. It continues to be something he enjoys, and he has had over 400 published columns.

Over the years, thousands of students have sat in Daake's classes or benefited from programs he helped to implement. But Daake quickly credits his family for helping him choose his Christian-oriented worldview that led him down this path.

Dr. Don Daake and his wife, Barb, live in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. 🌎

Leading the Way

GUIDING ACADEMIC RECOVERY INTO *Lifelong* SUCCESS

BY SUNSHINE HATTINGH ('10)
DIRECTOR OF PATH SUCCESS

The PATH program meticulously offers individualized mentoring for OKWU students.

In my role, I have the privilege of working closely with students on academic warning. These are students who did not meet the initial admissions criteria, experienced a cumulative GPA drop below 2.0, or had two consecutive semesters with a term GPA below 2.0. We pair these students with a PATH Coach to ensure that they receive the necessary academic guidance and encouragement to keep them on track for graduation.

These students must complete required study hours, and the PATH staff diligently monitor their grades. Our mission is to equip them for success and to help them develop a belief in their own ability to excel.

Last fall, we had a student-athlete who was facing academic challenges and entered our Academic Warning program. We try to match each student with the right PATH Coach, and we paired this particular student with Reed Garland, our men's director of residential life. Reed met with this student on a biweekly basis, and they discussed academic goals, upcoming assignments, projects, and tests. Together they formulated a strategic plan and created a prioritized list of goals.

But PATH is about more than just the academic side. Reed's mentorship went further, as he worked to ensure the student's overall well-being.

We desire to see the students become all that God made them to be. Reed and many of our other coaches keep their offices open for students to complete homework, ask questions, or just stop in and chat. The relationships that are developed in these interactions are what PATH is all about.

At the end of the semester, this student trusted Reed enough to seek his help with advising. Even though his schedule was already mostly set, the student wanted guidance about the enrollment process and what electives he should take. Reed was able to guide him through this process.

When final grades arrived, this student had returned to good academic standing and even earned a place on the Dean's List for the first time in his college career.

I had the honor of having this student in my class the following semester, where I saw him continue to excel as he demonstrated confidence and trust in himself to be a leader.

This is just one example of the impact that PATH Coaching is making in the lives of our students. It's a joy to witness the growth and learning of these young men and women. While there are many rewarding roles at OKWU, I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be a part of PATH and to come alongside students on their academic journeys. 🙏



PATH Student Coaches and Resident Directors equip students with essential skills for academic and personal success.

“PATH is about *more* than just the academic side.”



Reed Garland ('17) and Sunshine Hattingh ('10) coach students through PATH.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PATH COACHING AT [OKWU.EDU/PATH](https://okwu.edu/path)

STUDENT STORY

Running the Path

HOW OKWU EQUIPPED NATALIA QUIROZ TO FLOURISH



Natalia Quiroz is a biology major set to graduate from OKWU in 2025. Her journey to OKWU started in her hometown of Euless, Texas. Quiroz had dreams of playing college basketball, and she began searching for the right college fit for her with that dream in mind. She'd never even heard of OKWU until one day when she was contacted by the OKWU coaches.

"When I came here for my visit, I just liked the environment and the people," she said. "The mission of the school really brought me to OKWU."

In addition to her passion for basketball, Quiroz brought with her a desire to one day give back to her community as a pharmacist. As Quiroz began thinking about what to study in college, she researched pharmacy school and became interested in the idea of one day serving in the healthcare field in that capacity.

"Not many people realize how big of a role pharmacists play. They catch a lot of mistakes that doctors make and have to make sure that their patients are taking the right medications," Quiroz said. "I feel like their roles are misunderstood and way more important than people realize."

One thing that Quiroz was not planning on when she first came to OKWU was finding a love for running. As a senior in high school, Quiroz ran track, but she was surrounded by high-level athletes at her large school in Texas. She enjoyed it, but basketball was what she liked most.

At a small school like OKWU, students have the opportunity to try out several things. After her freshman year of basketball, Quiroz approached her coaches about possibly running track in the spring.



Natalia majors in biology and wants to serve as a pharmacist.

They accommodated her, and she continued with track in the spring and cross-country in the fall.

Quiroz quickly realized her hidden talent. She ran cross-country and qualified for NAIA Nationals in her first year on the team. She has already notched two NAIA invites as a cross-country star.

"If I was at another school, I wouldn't be able to have the opportunity to do both," she said. "All the coaches let me try both sports."

Quiroz has since stopped playing basketball and is now fully focused on running.

With her senior year coming up, Quiroz is beginning to consider what comes next. She plans to start applying to pharmacy schools in the spring in order to start in the fall of 2025. Her hope is to attend the University of North Texas Health Science Center College of Pharmacy, located about 40 minutes from her parents' home.

"My mom is always telling me to take advantage of my opportunity.... Having that support behind me helps me just to keep going and to achieve things I wouldn't be able to."

Quiroz has been well-prepared for her future thanks to OKWU's faculty in the science programs. Dr. Brian Turner and Dr. Ackrion Mangimela have been especially impactful.

"Dr. T is my advisor," she said, "and he always does devotions before class starts. I'll meet with him to pick classes and he'll just tell me, 'God has a plan.'"

Quiroz has also benefited from OKWU's PATH Coaching program. She took the strengths test and learned new insight into how she operated best. PATH has also provided her with guidance about navigating the college process as a whole. Quiroz is a first generation college student, and the transition was especially challenging as she entered into her sophomore year and started taking more classes in her major.

"My mom is always telling me to take advantage of my opportunity," she said. "They never got this opportunity. I was the first generation to be born in the United States. Having that support behind me helps me just to keep going and to achieve things I wouldn't be able to."

Quiroz has definitely taken advantage of her opportunities, both in her athletic pursuits and in her goal of becoming a pharmacist. One day, she hopes to work in a hospital pharmacy. 🏥



SCAN TO WATCH NATALIA'S STORY



FACULTY STORY

The Balancing Act

BY SAMANTHA JOHNSON
INSTRUCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

After finishing my first year as a full-time faculty member, I fully understand why “they” say the first year of teaching is the hardest.

“They” are right, and while I’ve loved every minute of it, it has been a journey of faith being entrusted with this position. Managing a busy teaching schedule, advising students from freshmen to graduating seniors, and learning just how important it is to remain steady, the ever-elusive concept of balance has been a juggle.

We see it in our students almost every day. Most of them have a lot of things demanding their attention: approximately 80% of our student

population are athletes. They have workouts and team events nearly every day, in addition to games both at home and away. Most are attempting anywhere between 15 and 16 credit hours each semester, which requires adapting to (and often impressing) five different professors; they put in hours and hours of study, research, and writing papers at the collegiate level. For some, the academic rigor of our university is the most demanding task they have encountered to

date. Most of our students are also working part-time jobs or internships to make ends barely meet. When you add in the pressures from home, adapting to roommates, living on your own for the first time, and figuring out how to do laundry, they are actively learning how to find a sense of balance.

We have several conversations with students urging them to do better with their coursework. Simply put: more is required. These aren’t easy conversations, but they are important. Professors can see the potential in students, and we know they can achieve high standards – they just need an honest conversation and a good push.

On the other hand, there have been several conversations with students about caring just a little bit less.

The anxiety levels among this generation are off-the-charts, and it’s also part of our job to help dial down those levels of anxiety so that students don’t self-sabotage and implode.

It’s helping them to know that it’s okay to score a 94% instead of a 97% and not make oneself sick over it. (They are, after all, the same letter grade.) In one instance, I told a student to skip my class, go and get some good sleep, eat something healthy, and treat themselves to either a good prayer walk or run and start to decompress from the stresses of life. It’s all in an attempt to help them find some balance.

If they will listen and can grasp the importance of balance, that skill will stay with them for a lifetime.

During this first year, I am learning the same things. The standards are high, and there have been times I’ve had to push myself to grow and do better – because more is required. One day this spring, I shut off my computer and left a stack of ungraded work on my desk so I could go to the gym, eat a healthy dinner, and get a good night’s rest before starting fresh the next day. When I am more balanced, my stress level is dialed down. Feedback given is not only more effective, but students seem to appreciate the grading – because it’s more balanced, too.

As I’m learning the balance of when to push and when to rest for myself, I marvel at the goodness of the God we serve. He knows when we need a push and also when we need to rest, too. We just need to listen, and know that we’ve been equipped, through faith, and that we are in the right place. 🙏



Scan to Listen

Beyond U Podcast

Listen to a new season — exploring faith, culture, and higher education.

STUDENT STORY



More Than A MANTRA

Every student who walks across the graduation platform at Oklahoma Wesleyan University has heard a unifying phrase: *Be One Sent*.

This phrase is both a mission statement and a commission, an encouragement for the graduates of OKWU to go forth and serve God in whatever capacity God has for them, be that ministry or business.

Ariela Nettleton ('24) has years of experience living out that slogan. She spent the first 13 years of her life on the mission field, where her parents served in the country of Bosnia. Nettleton grew up in Bosnia, speaking the language and attending Bosnian schools. When her family returned to the States, she was in middle school, just a few years from college, and her mind was already on ways she could get back to Europe.

"I wanted to go to England," she said. "That was my dream, to go to university in England."

Driven partially by her desire to study literature and partially by a yearning for home, Nettleton did not have OKWU on her initial list of colleges, despite the fact that her family has an extended legacy at the university.

"My mom told me that I had to apply to five schools in the US since I was applying to five in the UK," she said. "OKWU was the tenth school I applied to."

But a campus visit and the leading of the Lord led Nettleton to decide that OKWU was the right place for her. She became a fourth-generation OKWU student.

Attending OKWU ended up being a great decision.

FORMATIVE YEARS

Nettleton jumped into her college experience with both feet. She was part of the Honors College, volunteered with the Culture Connections club on campus, and found a surprising community with roots to her own childhood.

"I was very surprised at how many students were from Serbia and Eastern Europe," she said. "It was so meaningful to have conversations

with people because I also grew up in Eastern Europe."

Culture Connections is a club on campus aimed at unifying the campus through the many different cultures represented in the OKWU student body. During Nettleton's time at OKWU, the club grew from a relatively small cluster of students to a larger body that held several campus-wide events.

Along the way, Nettleton felt her calling being refined through the different opportunities available to her and through what she was learning in the classroom.

She's felt the call to global missions for a long time, and she credits her time at OKWU with helping her affirm that calling. Over the summers, she participated in several different missions trips and internships, expanding her horizons and helping her grow.

Nettleton completed her studies at OKWU and graduated in May 2024, earning a degree in English and a degree from the Honors College. She spent some time on a Global Partners trip to the Balkans during the early part of the summer. Although it wasn't exactly the place she grew

up, the similarities allowed her to feel comfortable and appreciate the opportunity to bring Jesus to the people she interacted with.

"I would say that we are *all* called to some type of ministry," she said.

A NEW MISSION FIELD

Nettleton returned to the US after her trip and is currently working for HeartMatters in Bartlesville, a Christ-centered organization focused on serving students from kindergarten to 8th grade by providing exploitation prevention education programs to the children and their families. For now, her ministry is located within the familiar confines of Bartlesville, though that may not always be true. Nettleton is appreciative of the things she learned as an OKWU student and for the experiences she had during her college years.

"OKWU has prepared me to be more empathetic and more adventurous," she said. "Just because my textbooks are gone doesn't mean those learning experiences are finished. I always want to be a student." 🙏



Four Generations of Alumni
Ariela Nettleton comes from a long heritage of OKWU alumni.

"When people ask me why I feel called to be a missionary, I say that's really the only thing in my mind — **it's my part in God's Kingdom.**"



WATCH VIDEO
AT OKWU.EDU

OKWU Headlines

NEWS 2023

OKWU's DNP Program Earns Full CCNE Accreditation

In the summer of 2023, OKWU's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program achieved full accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). After a rigorous review process, the program met all CCNE standards, solidifying its reputation for excellence in nursing education.

BeyondU Podcast Premieres

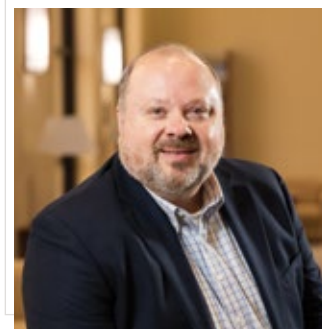
August 2023 marked the launch of BeyondU, OKWU's podcast. Featuring insightful conversations on faith, culture, and higher education, the podcast aims to engage the OKWU community and beyond in meaningful dialogue.

Shakibas Honored with President's Award

Trevor ('03) and Christina Shakiba received the 2023 President's Award at the Foster Bonanza. The couple are longtime supporters of OKWU, Trevor has also served on the Board of Trustees for seven years, contributing significantly to the university's growth and success.

First DNP Graduates Celebrate December Commencement

December 2023 marked a historic moment for OKWU with the graduation of its first Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) cohort. This milestone underscores the university's commitment to advanced nursing education.



PROF. GREG TACKETT
APPOINTED DEAN



TREVOR & CHRISTINA
SHAKIBA



FIRST CLASS OF
DNP GRADUATES

NEWS 2024

Tackett Appointed Dean of Health & Sciences

In January 2024, Professor Greg Tackett was named the Dean of the School of Health & Sciences. The school's restructure now includes OKWU's nursing, math, science, and exercise science programs, with Tackett leading the helm.

Mike Hood Joins OKWU as VP for Business Affairs

In April 2024, Mike Hood was welcomed as OKWU's new Vice President for Business Affairs. Hood brings over 20 years of experience from his tenure at LeTourneau University in Texas, promising strong leadership for financial strategies.

Dunn Institute Features Dr. Tom Harrison

March 2024 saw the annual Dunn Institute hosted at OKWU, with Dr. Tom Harrison as the keynote speaker. OKWU professors Dr. Stacey Duke and Sandy Lynn also led dynamic sessions, enriching the conference experience for all attendees.

Over \$200,000 Raised for Wesley Hall Renovation

During Give Week, the OKWU community united to raise more than \$200,000 for the Annual Fund. The funds fully financed the renovation project for Wesley Hall.



Yearly Faculty and Staff Celebrated

During May's graduation ceremonies, team OKWU was recognized by both student-focused awards and honors from their peers. (L to R) Aaron Bunker ('07), Director of PATH Development, was named one of the Staff Members of the Year. Dr. Kelley Sells received the Promising Teacher Award, and Dr. Jonathan Ensor ('05) was named Faculty Member of the Year. Dr. Jerome Van Kuiken received the Excellence in Teaching Award, and Melissa Little, Office Manager for the Department of Nursing, was the other Staff Member of the Year.

Mission Lodge Ribbon-Cutting

April 2024 celebrated the grand opening of Mission Lodge. Gifted by Barry and Joy Buell and renovated with a grant from the Parsons Foundation, the 1945 Mission Ranch House now blends mid-century modern elegance to embody OKWU's mission of hospitality, inviting guests to experience retreat and renewal.

Spring's New Graduates

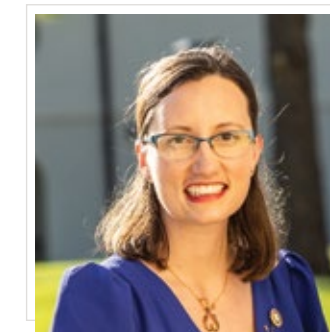
In May 2024, over 80 graduates walked the stage, joining the proud legacy of OKWU alumni. The ceremony was a momentous occasion, celebrating the hard work and achievements of the latest graduating class.

New Alumni Director Appointed

Aaron Bunker ('07) was appointed as the new Alumni Director in June 2024. With a passion for connecting with OKWU alumni, Bunker is set to enhance alumni relations and engagement.



MISSION LODGE
RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY



DR. ANNA MANGIMELA

Celebrating OKWU Faculty Achievements

Dr. Jonathan Ensor ('05) published two new books, *1 Corinthians: A Beginning-Intermediate Greek Reader* and *1 Corinthians Color-Coded: A Beginning-Intermediate Greek Reader*, enriching resources for biblical Greek students.

Professor Julie Hufstetler was honored with a selection for the Jack and Anita Hess Faculty Seminar at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, reflecting her dedication to Holocaust education.

Dr. Anna Mangimela ('08) completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Chamberlain University and was appointed Director of Graduate Nursing Programs at OKWU, bringing advanced expertise and leadership to the role. 🙌

2023-2024 HIGHLIGHTS CHAMPIONSHIP LEGACY

2023-24 was another strong year for the Eagles, who continue to shine on the field, court, and diamond! The Eagles boast several programs that have developed into nationally ranked powerhouses.

TEAM SUCCESS

Five OKWU teams won KCAC Championships and earned automatic bids to the NAIA National Championships.

Men's soccer (17-2-5) won the KCAC regular season and tournament championships. At the NAIA Tournament, the Eagles advanced all the way to the semifinals before their season came to an end.

Women's soccer (16-3-3) won the KCAC regular season and tournament championships for the 6th straight year. The Lady Eagles made it as far as the NAIA Opening Rounds before their season ended.

OKWU Volleyball (28-6) won the KCAC regular season and tournament championships. At the NAIA Tournament, the Lady Eagles advanced to the final site for the first time in program history.

Men's basketball (31-3) claimed the KCAC regular season and tournament titles and advanced to Kansas City for the NAIA Tournament.

OKWU Baseball (26-10) won the KCAC Tournament and earned a spot in the NAIA Opening Rounds. The Eagles battled hard before seeing their season end in Mississippi.



23-24 OKWU Volleyball Team

PERSONAL BESTS

Nine Eagles earned NAIA All-American honors, including athletes from men's and women's soccer, volleyball, men's basketball, and baseball.

45 Eagles earned spots on the All-KCAC teams for their respective sports.

Stevan Cvetanovic (men's soccer) was named NAIA Player of the Year and set the All-Time Goals Scored record for his career (139).

OKWU Volleyball coach **Tracie Gillette** surpassed the 300-win mark during the season and was named KCAC Coach of the Year.

Donte Lopez (wrestling) earned a spot at NAIA Wrestling Nationals, his second-straight appearance. 🏆



Donte Lopez
'24 NAIA Wrestling Nationals



IVAN
RISTIC

2024

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

Ivan Ristic came to Oklahoma Wesleyan University from Belgrade, Serbia, to play soccer. He was a member of the OKWU men's soccer team from 2012 to 2015, and he was a key contributor to the program during his time. In those four years, the Eagles made the NAIA tournament four times, and won three conference regular-season championships to go along with two conference tournament championships. Ristic was named OKWU's Student-Athlete of the Year in 2015 and was an NAIA All-American twice.

In 77 career games, Ristic scored 23 goals and added 5 assists from his primary position as defender.

In 2019, Ristic returned to OKWU as the head coach of the women's soccer program. Since then, he has helped shape the Lady Eagles into an NAIA powerhouse, dominating the KCAC and earning a trip to the NAIA Tournament each year.

He has coached numerous All-Americans and the 2023 NAIA Player of the Year, Laura Maria. As of the end of the 2023 season, Ristic has compiled a 95-13-5 record. He will surpass the 100-win milestone in the 2024 season.

For his contributions to OKWU Athletics as both a player and head coach, Ristic will be inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame at Homecoming 2024. 🏆

OKWU on the Move



1. Samuel ('16) and Courtney (Merrill, '16) Haynes have two boys: Rhett and Cooper. Samuel works for American Airlines, and Courtney teaches Pre-K for Broken Arrow Schools in Oklahoma. She was named Teacher of the Year in 2022-23.

Dennis and Joan Selfridge ('69) became great-grandparents in July 2023 with the birth of Cohen Devilbiss.



Dr. Jim Lo ('78) was inducted into the 2023 Indiana Wesleyan Athletics Hall of Honor and recognized for his prayer legacy. He was also named one of IWU's Alumni World Changers at Homecoming 2023.

2. Sean ('24) and Michaela (Reinertson, '24) Rollins were married on May 7, 2024. Both are pursuing advanced ministry degrees at Asbury Seminary.



3. Shane ('15 & '17) and Krista (Reimer, '16 & '19) Grate welcomed their second child, Addie Joy, in July 2023.

4. Anthony ('19) and Larissa Hale are expecting a baby girl in August. Anthony works at The Voice of the Martyrs, while Larissa is a 5th grade teacher at Wilson Elementary School in Bartlesville.

Chris ('91) and Wendy (Patterson, '94) England welcomed their first grandchild in the spring of 2024.



5. Nick and Anastasia (Thornhill, '22) Nankivell got married in June of 2023. They welcomed their first child, Blake, in March 2024.

6. Justin and Katie (Tuggle, '21) Huffman welcomed their first child, Shepherd, in May 2024.

Micah ('20) and Katelyn (Dills, '20) Smith welcomed a second child, Cole, in March 2024. 🙏

SHARE YOUR NEWS AT [OKWU.EDU/SHARE](https://okwu.edu/share)



HOMECOMING

October 4-5



FEATURING
COMEDIAN
Jaron Myers



REGISTER NOW
OKWU.EDU/HOMECOMING

Events

Friday, Oct. 4

- Homecoming Chapel Service
- Alumni Awardees Reception
- Golf Scramble Tournament
- Indoor Picnic
- Comedian: Jaron Myers
Get Your Seat

Saturday, Oct. 5

- Reunions and Activities
- 80s Brunch
- Athletic Games and Coronation

OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
2004, 2014, 2019

BARTLESVILLE WESLEYAN COLLEGE
1974, 1984, 1994, 1999

CENTRAL PILGRIM COLLEGE
MILTONVALE WESLEYAN COLLEGE

EVENTS

OKWU.EDU/VISIT

College Preview Days

- SEP 13, 2024
- OCT 25, 2024
- NOV 15, 2024*
- MAR 14, 2025
- APR 11, 2025

Visit and learn about the OKWU experience.
*Wesleyan Weekend Event

OKWU.EDU/GRADUATION

Graduation

DEC 14, 2024 / MAY 3, 2025

Celebration Service and Commencement ceremonies.

Dunn Institute

MAR 4-5, 2025

Invite-only event for Wesleyan pastors.



Save the Dates

OKWU.EDU/FOSTER

Foster Bonanza

OCT 3, 2024

A ticketed event for alumni and friends with great company, delicious food, an exclusive ranch tour, and a memorable auction.

OKWU.EDU/GIVEWEEK

Give Week

MAR 31-APR 4, 2025

Extend your impact by supporting the university's Annual Fund during Give Week.



... TO FOLLOW
... HAVE DECIDED TO
... ESUS



Student Pol Mur, surrounded by his soccer teammates, listens to University Pastor, Rev. Torrey Martin ('21), moments before his baptism.

BENEDICTION

Excerpt from Rev. Torrey Martin
Chapel Service April 24, 2024

“AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM THE THRONE SAYING, ‘LOOK! GOD’S DWELLING PLACE IS NOW AMONG THE PEOPLE, AND HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM. THEY WILL BE HIS PEOPLE, AND GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM AND BE THEIR GOD.’”

REVELATION 21:3 NIV

“In the journey of faith, we often strive to decipher the mysteries of the end times, seeking to control what remains beyond our grasp.

Yet, the essence of our pursuit is not found in the anticipation of heaven, but in the presence of Jesus.

He is the prize, the goal, and the fulfillment of our deepest longings.

As we navigate the complexities of life, let us fix our eyes on Him, not as a mere ticket to paradise, but as the ultimate reward.

Jesus beckons us to choose Him wholeheartedly, to walk with Him fervently, and to embody His love daily.

Remember, our aim is not a place; it is a person — Jesus.

*He wants us back, fully and truly.
Do we want Him? Amen.” 🙏*



**OKLAHOMA
WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY**

2201 Silver Lake Road, Bartlesville, OK 74006

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OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY



College PREVIEW DAYS



A Premier Christian University
in northeast Oklahoma

Plan your best visit day at
Oklahoma Wesleyan University:

SEP. 13, 2024

OCT. 25, 2024

NOV. 15, 2024*

MAR. 14, 2025

APR. 11, 2025

* Wesleyan Weekend event

okwu.edu/visit

800-468-6292



**TOMORROW
NEEDS** *You!*

