

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

The Northwestern News staff wishes you a safe and happy holiday with friends and family.

DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT

Thinking about calling it quits in one or more classes? Friday is the last day to drop a class or completely withdraw from all courses for the fall 2020 semester.



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COVID-19

Students will return to campus after break

By **LOGAN MERIWETHER**
Student Reporter

Should Northwestern come back to school after Thanksgiving? Many Northwestern students say they've had this question on their minds.

Caleb Mosburg, the university's dean of student affairs, said the classroom is the best place to be for students' safety, and it is the best place to be from a learning standpoint as well.

He said he does not believe that students are contracting the virus in the classroom. Contact tracing shows this, he said.

He said he believes the reason for that is because the faculty and students have done a great job of keeping the classrooms clean, and
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CAMPUS AS A CANVAS



Photo by Jordan Green

Visual Arts program student Jaycee Shepherd paints a mural in the Jesse Dunn building on Wednesday.

Art students paint murals in Jesse Dunn building

By **LANEY COOK**
Student Reporter

Two students in Northwestern's Visual Arts program have taken on the project of painting murals in the Jesse Dunn building.

Jaycee Shepherd, a junior, and Samantha Friday, a sophomore, started creating sketches and preliminary mock-ups for the murals in September. Kyle Larson, a visual arts instructor at Northwestern, said the murals will be an ongoing project through the spring semester.

The students are painting the murals on the first floor of the building, where the university's Agriculture Department is. Larson and Dr. Dean Scarbrough, an agriculture instructor, thought up the mural project while talking about ways to make the hallways
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Free counseling services available to students

By **GEORGE SMITH**
Student Reporter

Stress is something many college students will find themselves dealing with at one point or another.

At Northwestern, students and faculty can work with the director of the university's counseling and career services, Taylor Wilson, to manage their stress.

"If there is one thing to be thankful for, it's Taylor's commitment to her job," said Caleb Mosburg, the university's dean of student affairs and enrollment management. "She's a wife and a mother and still does her best to take care of our students' needs."

Wilson said she has seen an uptick in the amount of service her office has provided lately.

She said the coronavirus pandemic is one reason why more

people are seeking help.

The pandemic has altered the format of school and teaching methods, placing additional strain on the vitality of students' mental health.

**"If there is one thing to be thankful for, it's Taylor's commitment to her job."
— Caleb Mosburg**

Wilson said her services are used because of their accessibility.

"This year, I have been trying to develop and disperse more information regarding mental

See COUNSELING, Page 2



Photo by Jordan Green

Taylor Wilson, director of the university's counseling program, is shown in her office on Tuesday afternoon.

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News

SAFE SPACE Students say they feel secure on Northwestern's Alva campus

By **NICK DILL**
Student Reporter

Safety is a major factor in college campuses and in college towns.

Safewise, a home security company, compiled a list of the 50 safest colleges in America in 2020. The company studies national crime and safety trends and analyzed thousands of colleges from across the nation.

Northwestern Oklahoma State University is not listed as one of the top 50 safest colleges in America, but that doesn't mean the university is unsafe.

Northwestern students say they believe the university is a safe place.

"The campus police always drive around campus. It's great whenever you see a campus police officer because they will come up and ask how you're doing, and make sure you get wherever you need to safely."

— **Stephen McCluskey**

Do students at Northwestern feel safe on campus and in the town of Alva?

Kenny Miller, a senior student at Northwestern, said he believes Northwestern is a safe campus.

"I have been here over three years and have yet to run into a safety issue," Miller said. "It is a friendly university as far as social security goes."

Miller said he believes Alva is a safe town. It's a rural area, and there is not much that could go wrong, he said.

Stephen McCluskey, a senior at



Photo by Jordan Green

A police car is shown in a parking lot on campus near Ryerson Hall in this photo on Wednesday morning. Some students say they feel safe on campus.

Northwestern, said he believes the campus is always safe, especially at night.

"We have many bright lights on around campus making me feel safe," McCluskey said. "The campus police always drive around campus. It's great whenever you see a campus police officer because they will come up and ask how you're doing, and make sure you get wherever you need to safe-

ly."

Kaitlyn Phillips, a senior at Northwestern, said she believes Northwestern is a safe campus.

She said university officials go above and beyond for the students, and that they care about each and every student.

"I truly believe they want what is best for every student on this campus, and are willing to do whatever it takes to make each stu-

dent feel safe," Phillips said.

Phillips said Alva is a safe town because it is a small town where it is easy to get from one place to another. She said the community members play a big part in making everyone feel safe.

Every year, Northwestern Oklahoma State University releases the Campus Security and Fire Safety Report for the calendar year.

The campus police department

compiles crime data and reviews its university safety policies in the report.

The university works with local law enforcement agencies to collect appropriate criminal statistical data for the report.

The annual report has not yet been released this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. The deadline for the report is now Dec. 31, a university official said.

COUNSELING: Making schedules can reduce stress, counselor says

Continued from Page 1
health to be able to reach the students that are not ready to seek counseling services," she said.

Wilson's services are free to Northwestern students.

"Students can request a counseling appointment through the NWOSU counseling webpage," she said. "In efforts to meet all students' demands, we offer short-term counseling sessions to all students, averaging from four to six sessions per semester. The first appointment will be a brief screen-

ing to discuss counseling needs to determine the appropriate level of therapeutic care.

"Following the initial screening, recommendations will be made for the most beneficial route to help with concerns.

"Suggestions can include short-term counseling on campus, referral to other campus resources or long-term counseling with off-campus community providers."

Wilson said one way for students to manage their stress is to effectively manage their time.

"Make a schedule and stick to it," she said. "Either a 30-minute increment or an hour increment schedule, and fill it up with your class times, when to do homework, and at least 30 minutes of self-care."

She also advises students to gather all of the syllabuses for their classes and write in the due dates of their assignments in a daily planner.

Students should check both planners daily to stay on-track, she said.

IN BRIEF

Children's play postponed

The theater department decided to postpone the children's play.

With the recent increase in cases, Mickey Jordan, instructor of technical theater, said it is in the interest of the safety of the students to postpone "Gretchen and the Grudge."

"At this time, none of our cast members have symptoms and we do not want to risk accidentally exposing anyone or their families this close to the break," Jordan said. "So, we have decided

for the safety of our actors to postpone."

The exact day is still to be determined, but the group plans to perform the play sometime in January or February.

The play will be a short one — only 20 minutes — and will be presented as a formal table reading of the script and will be recorded. Participants will focus on voice acting and inflection. Students, ranging from first through fifth grade, will watch the play at their respective schools.

News

LEAFING AN IMPRESSION

Community members thankful for students' help raking up leaves



Members of Northwestern's Student Government Association and President's Leadership class recently helped Alva residents rake up fallen leaves on their properties. Alva resident Jack Fisher said: "Saturday, I was fortunate to have visitors from student government and president's leadership, who were collecting leaves for community service. I learned that several of my friends slightly over 80 years old also were glad to see the students. They had rakes, bags and a trailer to haul off collections of leaves." Pictured from left are: Tabor Budy, Austin Rankin, Carli Seabolt, Lora Yosbelli, Ethan Sacket, Carys Delaplane, and Jack Fisher.

Photo provided

MURALS: Students say they enjoy the challenge of painting

Continued from Page 1
of Jesse Dunn and the Agriculture Department more inviting for students.

"Professor Larson asked if I wanted to have this opportunity, and I said, 'Yes,'" Friday, a psychology major, said. "I've never painted a mural before, so I thought this opportunity could be a great learning experience."

Friday said she and Shepherd independently work on each mural.

Shepherd chose her design out of consideration for what the Agriculture Department wanted as well as what she thought would look best on the wall.

She used photos given to her as well as her knowledge of how to compose a large painting.

"I chose to do the rodeo mural because, before I came to Northwestern, I had never been to a rodeo, and so I would say that it's a big thing that sets this school apart from others," Friday said.

Larson said he is excited about the two students taking on this role in the project.

"This project shows how departments on campus can work

together to give students opportunities to express themselves while creating a more inviting campus environment, an environment that really shows how passionate and creative our students are," Larson said.

Friday said she finds interest in the painting process. She said she has never worked with this big of a canvas before, and she likes ex-

ploring this new opportunity here on campus.

Shepherd said she is eager to be able to do something that represents her school.

"It's just a really cool experience to be picked to do such an awesome thing," Shepherd said. "I feel very blessed."

The murals are expected to be completed next semester.

RETURN: Officials say university's contact tracing system is effective

Continued from Page 1
students are staying socially distanced, he said.

Mosburg said there were a lot of issues during the spring semester when Northwestern shifted to virtual learning.

He said his office had a lot of phone calls about classroom issues, which caused a lot of strain not only for teachers, but for students as well.

"A lot of students made the comment that they could not learn virtually and needed to be back in the classroom," Mosburg said.

Mosburg said he has noticed

the rise in positive COVID-19 cases not just locally, but nationally as well. He said he talked to health officials, and they told him Northwestern was doing a great job of keeping COVID-19 contained.

Mosburg said there are students and faculty who believe the university should shift to online learning after the break, and there are students and faculty who believe the university should resume in-person learning.

He said he believes it is best to keep students in the classroom as long as they continue adhering to

the university's safety guidelines.

Bo Hannaford, the university's vice president of academic affairs, said the plan for coming back to school in-person started when Northwestern conducted a survey of students' opinions at the beginning of the semester.

A majority of students wanted to come back to campus, he said. Hannaford said university administrators are talking daily about the university's COVID-19 cases.

"Mosburg's office does a great job of contact tracing, and the county health department is overwhelmed," Hannaford said. "It

can take a while to get to people. The way we have been doing it has been really efficient."

Hannaford said he agrees with Mosburg that students aren't getting COVID-19 in the classroom. Students haven't reported coming into contact with it during class, he said.

He said officials are still hearing from students and faculty as well as talking with administrators to keep planning and staying updated daily.

Hannaford said the university still plans to host an in-person graduation ceremony Dec. 6.

He said graduation will probably be smaller than normal, and it will be faster. He said people were upset about the number of tickets allowed for graduation. Hannaford said the university is keeping the same guidelines as it does for classes in an effort to limit contact between people.

Elizabeth McMahan, a sophomore at Northwestern, said she is fine with coming back after Thanksgiving break because it gives her more time to train and gives her a chance to stay caught up with her professors going into finals.

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Letters to the editor shall bear the author's handwritten signature, hometown, classification, title, etc., address and phone number for verification and shall be kept on file. Unsigned letters to the editor will not be published.

Letters must be turned in by noon on Monday to the News office in JDA232. Letters via e-mail are acceptable as long as they follow the rules stated above and can be sent to nwnews@nwsu.edu. Please limit submissions to no more than 250 words. The editors reserve the right to condense or edit any letter for grammar, libel and space limitations. All letters submitted may not be used.

All letters represent the views of the author.

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Editorial

Students voice opinions on how university responded COVID-19

Students have positive things to say about the university's policies for the pandemic during an uncharted school year.

By NICK DILL
Student Reporter

The fall semester at Northwestern Oklahoma State University has been unlike any other semester before.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the university had to implement new policies and procedures. Some of the ways Northwestern has handled COVID-19 is by implementing some new procedures, which include wearing masks in all campus buildings, making sure everyone is six feet away, seating charts in classrooms and posting the number of active coronavirus cases across all three campuses.

How do Northwestern students feel about the university handling of the coronavirus?

Maggie Peterson, a sophomore at Northwestern, said she feels the university is handling COVID-19 the best they can.

"It is new for everyone, and they are trying to take as many precautions as possible," Peterson said. "Of course everyone can improve on something, but I believe Northwestern is doing extremely well with the circumstances."

She said she has no worries with how the school is handling COVID-19. Peterson said they are working hard at keeping our campus healthy.

Kaitlyn Phillips, a senior at Northwestern, feels that the university is handling COVID-19 good. She said they are doing the best they can, and we should give them credit because this is all new to everyone. Phillips said she feels like we shouldn't come back after Thanksgiving break.

She said once everyone goes home and comes back, the virus is going to spread even more than it already has, and she just doesn't feel like we should take that chance.

Stephen McCluskey, a senior at Northwestern, feels the university is doing a good job of dealing with COVID-19 right



Photo by Jordan Green

Herod Hall is shown in this photo taken Wednesday morning.

now. He said they are making all students wear masks, which is great.

"I like how the school is making us wear masks, and how they have hand sanitizer everywhere," McCluskey said. "I especially like how the school cafeteria has servers handing out food instead of having students spreading germs."

Peyton McDonald, a junior at Northwestern, feels that the school is handling the situation the best that it can.

"We are learning more about COVID-19 with each passing day and adjusting the best way possible," McDonald said. "They are following the guidelines set by the CDC, the United States, and the state of Oklahoma to the best of their abilities."

He said his biggest worry about how the school is handling the pandemic is the decision to come back after Thanksgiving. McDonald said students are going to be gone for about 10 days and will be around many family and friends.

He said this could be a very bad situation if students are not careful with who they are around.

He also said he likes the way the university is handling COVID-19 in the classroom.

"I like that the school requires at least one seat between each student," McDonald said. "This is beneficial because it limits the amount of close contact. I also appreciate the assigned seats used for contact tracing."

Erika Hernandez, a junior at Northwestern, said she thinks the university is doing a good job of handling COVID-19 cases. She said her only worry is how the people in quarantine are being treated.

"I know our university is doing all they can to provide the necessary things they need," Hernandez said. "Being in isolation I think we can provide them with activities or just something, so they don't feel alone."

She also likes how the University is taking all the precautions.

"The professors are enforcing the precautions that need to be taken to keep everyone as safe as we can," Hernandez said. "I also like how the professors and faculty are willing to work with students to accommodate us during these difficult times."

With these safety procedures in place, Northwestern Oklahoma State University plans to have students return to campus for two weeks and resume classes after Thanksgiving break.

EDITOR'S RANT OF THE WEEK

By MICHELLE WILLSON
Editor-in-Chief

I'm going to be honest. I don't think we should come back after Thanksgiving. Not that I'm worried for my safety, but after finals how am I to be sure that I haven't come in contact with someone who has the virus.

To be safe, I would have to stay in the dorms an extra two weeks to ensure that I would not spread the virus (if I came in contact with it) to my immunocompromised mother or her infant daycare kids. There is no easy way for me to avoid contact with them because my mom has the daycare at our house.

I have been as careful as possible these last two weeks to avoid contact with pretty much everyone. Because I want to be home on Thanksgiving. I could try to do that again, but with so many people going home and being around other people there is a greater chance I will come in contact with someone who has it after Thanksgiving.

I realize it's not the best situation. I know people don't do online classes well, but I just feel like the students aren't taking it seriously. The amount of parties I've seen on Snapchat stories and students at raves without masks on is absolutely appalling to me.

I know that the virus might not affect you, but my friend's mom is in the hospital with COVID-19 on a ventilator right now, fighting for her life. That's a scary feeling, and it's not even my mom. I have no clue what I would do in that situation. And I don't want to be in that situation. You should have the compassion to follow the CDC guidelines so you don't put someone in that situation.

I feel like the town of Alva has pretty much forgot about the pandemic altogether. I've seen people in Walmart without masks on. I've seen people refuse to take a mask from the employees when offered, and those wearing masks are normally wearing it under their nose.

If we all took the virus seriously, we could have less positive cases. But there's about 20% of the population right now that just doesn't care, and to be honest, your privilege is showing.

Just because you're not fearing for your life or fearing for a loved one's life doesn't mean those around you aren't. I don't know how to stress to you that you should care about other people and their situations, even if they don't affect you.

**Interested in writing?
Share your opinions!
Contact McKayla Holson**

mrholson30@rangers.nwsu.edu

Editorial

Celebrating Native American heritage

By **DACODA MCDOWELL-WAHPKECHE**
Student Reporter

I am an enrolled citizen of the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma and was raised traditionally with the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. Within the first ten days of being born, I was given the Indian name of Piwaneskaka, which translates to fine feathers of a prairie chicken.

November was designated as Native American Heritage Month. Not many people know about it because of the lack of Native Americans in this country compared to other ethnicities.

Growing up in Little Axe, it was a great mixture of all backgrounds. I was raised around Native Americans traditions like stomp dancing, war dance and bread dance, traditions where I fast and celebrate our creator.

Throughout all those times of dancing and honoring our elders in the tribe, I got to listen to many stories about how the elders were raised and were taught the traditions that they teach us now.

Little Axe was founded through Absentee Shawnee his-

tory. The Absentee Shawnee flag was actually created by a Little Axe resident, detailed with "Li Si Wi Nwi," which means "Among the Shawnee."

When I was coming to Northwestern on a visit for Cross Country, I was told that the town was too redneck. Instantly, as a recruit, I felt at home.

The first few weeks of the fall semester of 2019 was tough on me because I thought I was not good enough. I was no longer among the Shawnee.

I finally felt comfortable enough here to find people who would want to create Northwestern's first Native American Student Association.

Listening to the stories of other Native Americans on this campus was good and felt like home, but it was not enough. I finally got satisfaction whenever I started listening to more than just Native stories.

I got to hear stories about how one of my closest friends here at Northwestern was probably violating child labor laws at the age of 7. It was also interesting to hear another Northwestern student ask if we still live in teepees.

For your information, we do

not. Now, there are practices in the Absentee Shawnee Tribe that do involve teepees.

I was not upset or offended whenever she asked, it just saddened me because it proves there are people who don't know Native Americans.

I informed the individual of how we work now, but it is actually a great example to learn from.

At Northwestern we have students who come from overseas who have great stories, but do not forget that the United States was the melting pot of other countries' people moving and settling here.

There are so many stories to hear from. We have people from California, Kansas, Arizona, Michigan and many other states on our campus. We don't need to settle to our little friend groups and just get to know them.

Meeting new people enriches the college experience. I know that many of my closest friends here knew absolutely nothing about my town or my tribe before they met me. That is okay.

I started to follow two Northwestern students to further my growth; I realized that serving people and hearing their stories makes this university special.



Photo provided

Dacoda McDowell-Wahpeche's family poses for a group photo.

When I stopped looking for things that separate myself from my classmates and looked for things that I had in common, then I felt as if I grew into a more complete student who wanted to hear other peoples' stories.

The tribes within this country are all different. Some may have characteristics and practices that are equivalent to each other, but they are different.

Little Axe is comprised of citizens of various tribes like Cherokee, Absentee Shawnee, Comanche, and many more. They don't look and strike each other down for their differences but find them interesting. In this social climate

we live in today, I hope we realize we don't need to tear each other down because of our political stances or ideologies.

Instead, help build a kinder society by looking to friends or strangers and ask how they are doing. We have plenty of stories just on the Alva campus that need to be told. Regardless of where they are from, there are stories that make who we are today.

To celebrate Native American Heritage Month, get to know Native Americans on Northwestern's campus but learn from it and get to know others more deeply like Native Americans do with each other in different tribes; Niyaawe.

An epic rivalry: 'The Office' versus 'Parks and Rec'

By **SHANNON NESSERALLA**
Student Reporter

Two very similar Netflix shows always seem to be in competition on which one is better.

For someone who has seen both many many times I thought I would compare them and tell you which show is better.

The shows I will be comparing are "The Office" and "Parks and Recreation." Both have the same idea meaning the characters look and talk to the camera.

Both shows are not serious at all with no real problem and solution, perfect for background noise or if you're bored.

I watched "Parks and Recreation" a lot before "The Office." Now it's the other way around.

"Parks and Recreation" is more serious but still funny. It is based on a woman named Leslie Knope who has a great work ethic, wants to make the world and her town a better place to live for her community and she loves waffles.

Leslie works as the deputy director at the parks and recreation department. She is always trying to think of ways to make the city of Pawnee a better place for kids. Leslie's dream is to build a park from scratch and it takes about the whole seven seasons for her to do



so, but she does other tasks with the help of her coworkers.

"The Office" is a whole joke, don't get me wrong I love this show, it is always playing on my TV and I laugh at it no matter how many times I watch it. But there is nothing serious about it, thanks to Michael Scott, even if you don't know who that is you have heard that name. He is the manager at a paper company called Dunder Mifflin and jokes around 100% of the time.

Now that I talked somewhat about the two shows, I will get to comparing to end this debate of which one is better. "The Office" was made in 2005 so if it was made in 2020 with the same humor it would get a lot of hate because people get offended easily these days. "Parks and Recreation" is just as funny but a different kind of funny, let me give an example of what that means.

In Parks and Rec there is a character named Jerry who is a clutz, he always messes up, spills stuff, etc. Everyone in the parks and Rec department makes fun of him. Jerry dislocated his shoulder by falling in a lake going after his burrito he dropped but told his coworkers he was mugged so they wouldn't make fun of him.

That kind of humor is okay to watch in front of kids but in "The Office" there are more episodes that can't be shown in front of kids. Jim and Dwight, characters in "The Office," always give each other a hard time and pull pranks on each other.

It is really funny but like I mentioned before, Michael Scott makes everyone dirty or worse in the office.

My conclusion to this is "The Office" is the superior show. It works for background noise, to kill time, and to make you happy.

The imposter is among us

By **LANEY COOK**
Student Reporter

If you are looking for a game to play on your phone wherever you are, you need to download "Among Us."

"Among Us" is a game where up to 10 people can join and will be deemed either an imposter or a crewmate.

An imposter is the person running around "sabotaging" each room in the game to, essentially, kill the crewmates.

The crewmates, in turn, try and avoid the imposter while they go about doing tasks in different rooms in the game before the imposter kills each crewmate off.

If an imposter kills someone, the body is left behind for the other people to find it and given the option to 'report' it.

Reporting it brings everyone to a group discussion to try and figure out who the imposter is by chatting amongst everyone playing the game.

At the end of discussion time, you are given the option to vote someone out or skip the vote so no one will be ejected.

If enough votes are tallied up against someone, they can get

voted off the game and be seen as a ghost on screen, the same outcome as if you are killed by an imposter.

The game is made up of people of all ages from all over the place. You can get in games with friends who also have the app by entering a six-digit code.

The little characters posing as crewmates and imposters can be personalized by colors.

The different options of colors are red, blue, dark green, pink, orange, yellow, black, white, purple, brown, cyan or lime green.

People typically reference to each other by their color, but you can also enter a name of your choice.

As the game has gone on, people have started a slang for people who they think is an imposter and call them "sus" short for suspicious. It emerged fast and people everywhere use the term.

This game is a fun way to just sit down and submerge into the online gaming world; chat with the people playing in your group, send your friends the code, and run and either do your tasks or try to kill the crewmates.

Alva business owners battle economic fallout from COVID-19

From food-makers to banks, innovation is key

Rural businesses weather the COVID storm

By KOLTON FISHBACK
Student Reporter

Geoff Clark, the CEO of Value Added Products in Alva, was worried about how the coronavirus could affect his business. He began to understand the pandemic at the beginning of March, and workers at his company focused on protecting their health – and their employment.

“In the face of the pandemic, I could not bring myself to putting them on the streets with no health benefits,” Clark said.

When the coronavirus pandemic began, it quickly changed how people complete tasks in their day-to-day lives. The virus was unexpected, and weeks later, it was rapidly spreading throughout the United States. The spread eventually caused schools to shut down, businesses to close, and sport events to be canceled to ensure the public’s safety.

The pandemic affected Alva’s business sector. In some instances, businesses or companies were forced to shut down or change their hours in response to the virus.

Clark said his employees are the most important assets at Value Added Products. On March 15, the company started checking the temperatures of all employees upon their arrival to work.

The company also required employees to wear masks, wash their hands frequently, and clean the factory’s equipment every three hours.

Value Added Products was established in 1999. The company is an Oklahoma farmer-owned cooperative that produces premium food products with farmers’ crops, Clark said.

Value Added Products partners with more than 800 farmers across America. The company is known for making pizza crust and other types of bread products that are available nationwide.

Godfather’s Pizza, U.S. Foods and Alpha Food Co. are some of the company’s business partners, Clark said.

Clark said 85% of the company’s business was affected because of the virus when schools, restaurants and casinos closed down. Clark said the pandemic also impacted pizza toppers, meat manufacturers and distribution companies because they were stuck with inventory and had nowhere to ship it.

The company went through two rounds of furloughs and had to close for a period of time because it had no product orders. Clark resorted to a furlough rather than a layoff because he wanted his employees back, he said.

CHURCHES IMPACTED, TOO

Chris Ruwaldt, pastor of the First Baptist Church, said he believes his church is doing well.

“We were pretty well prepared



Geoff Clark, right, the CEO of Value Added Products in Alva, watches as two of his employees fold a piece of pizza crust inside the company’s factory. Photo by Kolton Fishback

for it, honestly, Ruwaldt said. “The only thing we had to do was make sure people got the news that we were not going to meet physically.”

The church’s attendance levels have been lower since the pandemic began, Ruwaldt said.

Ruwaldt does not require parishioners to wear masks during church sessions. Church leaders have made minor adjustments to certain aspects of the worship services. Ruwaldt said people are fearful about the situation and want to wait things out.

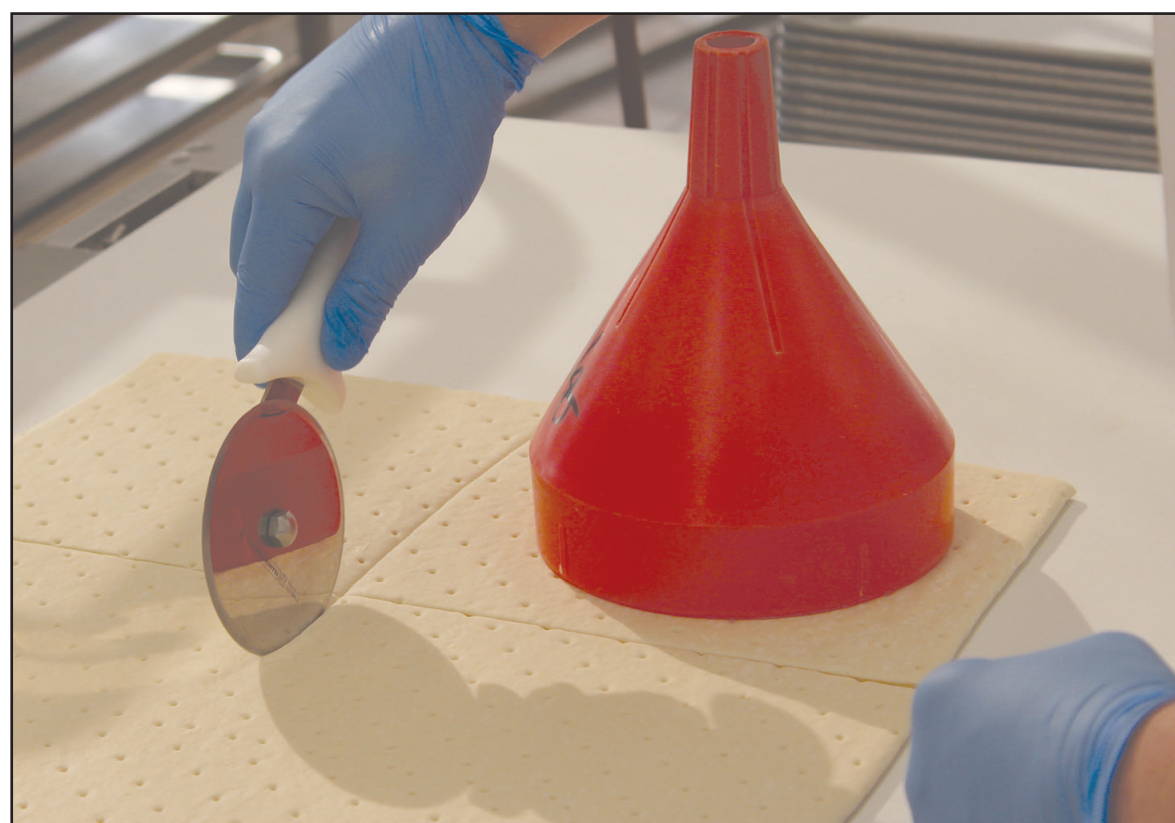
ONLINE BANKING BECOMES POPULAR OPTION

Kim Baugh, a compliance officer at BancCentral, said the bank is serving customers in different ways because of the pandemic.

Customers have always had the option of using online banking, and BancCentral has developed a new product called E-sign. The product allows customers to sign documents electronically and securely, Baugh said. Customers can then complete their banking via email.

“While COVID has been challenging for us, it’s also been a really exciting time,” Baugh said.

Baugh said the workload for bank employees has remained consistent. She said employees have had additional work because of the CARES Act and related stimulus packages. Employees have processed different types of loans through the federal government. The Paycheck Protection Program, designed to help small businesses pay their employees amid the economic downturn, has required bank employees to do extra work, she



In this photo, an employee at the Value Added Products factory in Alva slices a piece of pizza using a cutting wheel. Photo by Kolton Fishback

said. The bank’s employees are using hand sanitizer, wearing face masks and gloves and cleaning the bank frequently because they handle money, Baugh said. Customers may wear masks while in the bank if they choose to do so, and the bank provides face masks to customers.

In some situations, officials have closed the bank’s lobby and conducted business by appointment only, and by using the bank’s drive-through, Baugh said.

Cleaning crews come often to ensure the health of staff and customers, Baugh said.

“[We’re going to] keep the pulse on our community and take it one day at a time,” Baugh said.



The First Baptist Church of Alva on College Avenue is shown in this photo. Photo by Jordan Green

By GEORGE SMITH
Student Reporter

The evening of March 24 became a long one when an Alva salon owner was called back to her shop after closing hours.

Jeena White, owner and operator of the salon Hair on the Square, spent the evening cutting hair for a few of her loyal patrons.

After she finished styling her customers’ hair and swept up the floor of the shop, she walked outside and locked the door. It remained locked for 30 days, just as Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt’s executive order required all non-essential businesses in the state of Oklahoma to do.

“The worst part about closing was not knowing when we were going to be able to open back up,” White said, “whether it was just going to be 30 days, or if it was going to be longer.”

The sustainability of small businesses across the nation is reeling at the setbacks that the coronavirus pandemic has imposed on them. Businesses in rural areas with relatively low net incomes have been affected the most by health-related lockdown orders.

MILLIONS AFFECTED BY ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

In April, a survey from the Main Street America found that 7.5 million businesses may have to shut down if the economic effects of the pandemic don’t ease soon.

According to a July poll of small businesses conducted by MetLife and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 70% of small business owners say that, in the wake of overwhelming fixed costs and significant declines in sales, they won’t have enough money to cover the overhead costs of their businesses. Around 60% of small business owners say they worry about having to permanently close because of these financial hardships.

However, the Alva community fared better when compared to the national averages for small businesses.

The reason small businesses in Oklahoma weren’t as heavily impacted by the pandemic is because of the looser constraints that Stitt’s executive order implied, said Geoff Clark, the CEO of Value Added Products in Alva.

“The fast reaction from our government and president saved a lot of businesses from going immediately under,” he said.

The week of March 15, VAP lost 80% of its business, Clark said. Because the company does so much business with schools and casinos that decided to shut down temporarily, major supply chains were sitting on millions of dollars’ worth of inventory that had no buyers. Clark decided to add to VAP’s market and sell to those businesses not impacted by pandemics – busi-



Kim Foster, the owner of the Copper Penny store in downtown Alva, poses for a portrait with some of her store’s Christmas decor in this photo on Nov. 17. Photo by Jordan Green

nesses such as retailers, where demand stays relatively constant, he said.

“The demand of food has not been crucially impacted,” Clark said. “The country’s dependence on retailers to sell groceries is still readily marketable.”

VAP is a cooperative of almost 900 farmers in the region who sell their goods directly to VAP. The company buys grain from local farmers and uses it to make products such as pizza dough.

“The fast reaction from our government and president saved a lot of businesses from going immediately under.”
— Geoff Clark

Referenced in a CNBC video, Paychex CEO Martin Mucci said that, although the demand for products will rise as businesses begin to reopen, the supply may not be able to cope with the rapid increase because of shortages in the supply chain.

Janie Gould, manager of Merrifield’s Office Supplies, said: “In my 28 years of work, I have never had back orders. Now, I have back

orders on items that I typically keep stocked on the shelves.”

IN-PERSON SALES CRUCIAL FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

For the boutique businesses located around the downtown square, Erica Kraft, owner and operator of Wicked Threads, said an often overlooked aspect of small retail businesses in Alva is the amount of foot traffic needed to sustain the business. With the cancellation of fall sporting events at Northwestern, the decline in foot traffic will have an impact on sales at retail stores all around downtown.

La-Dee-Da owner and operator Dee Wiebener said her business will sometimes make enough sales during a Saturday home football game at the university that her store can net a profit for the whole week in one day.

Wiebener also said she was able to make some online sales during the 30-day shutdown, but the in-person sales are what keep her business afloat.

West of La-Dee-Da, the Copper Penny, owned and operated by Kim Foster, makes 100% of its profit through merchandise bought in-store.

Some businesses in the community used a hybrid format to stay open during the 30-day lockdown.

The Alva Golf and Country Club closed its cafeteria, yet it maintained membership and course sales, which helped the or-



The La-Dee-Da store in downtown Alva is shown in this November photo. Photo by George Smith

ganization stay afloat, said Jennifer Taylor, the new general manager of the clubhouse. “The people who come to golf at Alva still came to golf even though we weren’t serving food or allowing people into the clubhouse,” she said.

NOT ALL JOBS AFFECTED

The Farmers Cooperative Association used its storefront lobby on the corner of 4th and Barnes streets as a curbside pick-up spot. The Co-op only took call-in orders and window orders for customers to grab supplies and tools needed for their farms or other projects or

businesses. Because no customers were allowed inside the store lobby, the store’s manager, Rick Rhodes, decided that the time to rearrange the store was better than ever. “We decided to take advantage of the shut-down and reset the gondolas in the store so that, as you walk in, you’re able to see down the aisles,” Rhodes explained.

In general, Rhodes said sales were relatively unaffected by closing the lobby to passersby.

“I’m sure some sales were lost because people couldn’t come in and browse our selection of merchandise,” he said. “We did allow

Feature

What are NWOSU students thankful for?

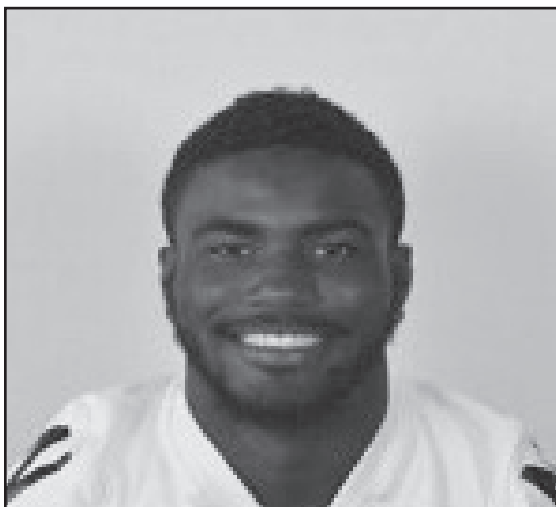
Thanksgiving is more meaningful to college students because most students are away from their families and only see their families on holidays, if that.

By **OVELL PATTERSON**
Student Reporter

Javion Combs is a sophomore from Norman, Oklahoma. His major is psychology. He said: "I am thankful for my family because without them I have no idea how I would make it in life. I plan to go home for Thanksgiving and spend time with family. I am keeping the Thanksgiving spirits up by just being thankful for another day to live and be around those that I love."



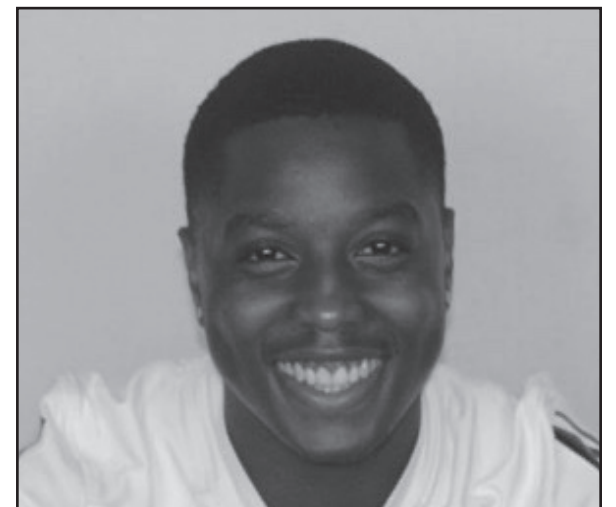
Isaiah Wallace is a freshman from Detroit, Michigan. His major is health and sports science. He said: "I am thankful for my mom because without her I don't know how I would make it in life without her. I plan to go home for Thanksgiving and spend time with my friends and family. I am keeping the Thanksgiving spirits up by being thankful for all the things I have overcome in life."



Torrance Stevens is a sophomore from Houston, Texas. His major is kinesiology. He said: "I am thankful for my friends and family. I am thankful for them because they give me a purpose in life. Being around them and talking to them keeps a smile on my face day to day. My Thanksgiving plans are to spend time with my family and enjoy a nice Thanksgiving meal. The things I plan on doing to keep my spirits up is just stay in touch with my family, knowing I will be with them shortly."



Doeshun Dotson is a freshman from Denver, Colorado. He is a health and sports science major. He said: "I am thankful for being safe. Many people throughout the world even within the United States do not have secure sense of safety this Thanksgiving. This Thanksgiving I am taking a trip to Denver, Colorado to see and spend time with my family. Truly, your company is the most meaningful gift. I will keep the spirits up by surrounding myself with those I love."



Denzel Davis is a junior from Houston, Texas. His major is health and fitness management. He said: "This Thanksgiving, I am thankful to be able to go home and see my family for the holidays. The reason I am thankful for this is because I don't get to see them often due to being in school, so it is a blessing I am going to be able to. My plans are to enjoy time with family and eat good food. To keep my spirits up during Thanksgiving is hard to do right now because of covid, but being around family and friends with help."

South Hall is getting into the Thanksgiving mood



Entertainment

'Gravity Falls' series is perfectly juvenile

By MICHELLE WILLSON
Editor-in-Chief

I finally did it. I broke down and I started watching "Gravity Falls."

For those of you who don't know what this series is about. This brother and sister duo are sent to live with their grunkle Stan for the summer. They quickly start to notice things that are off with the forest around where they live. They find a book that talks about the creatures that live there, and they go on huge adventures where they find these creatures and document the ones that are in the book.

Before you tell me that it's a juvenile cartoon, I know that, and I like that. I have always loved cryptids and mythological beings and to have this cartoon mystery show that you see all of these creatures is absolutely amazing. I love putting puzzle pieces together with Dipper as this series goes on. I love when things finally tie up and makes sense.

I would honestly give this series a 4 out of 5. Not because it's amazing well put together you know a perfect show, but because it was advertised in a way that I knew what I was going to get



into. I knew it was going to be a little kidish juvenile and soft mystery. I wasn't surprised by any of that. I've seen posts and memes about it. That finally wore me down to watch it, and I can't believe I waited this long.

I recommend this to anyone who likes cryptids or mythological creatures or anyone who wants

a softer show. It's not one you really have to think about; it's not dramatic to the point to keep your attention. A lot of times, I have it on just for background noise. It's a great show to watch before bed because it's not scary, but it does have a little bit of mystery in it that gets you thinking but not too hard.



'Criminal Minds' a classic that will never get old

By SHANNON NESSERALLA
Student Reporter

299 episodes, 15 seasons filled with murder, homicide, suicide and looking into the human mind. This is just what you can expect while watching "Criminal Minds."

In each episode you can expect a new way that each killer has killed. You can also expect a different outcome during each episode. Whether they catch the killer, the killer ends their own life, and even in some episodes they manage to get away.

The show also has a great cast with multiple different personalities. One of the biggest personalities on the show is their technical analyst, Penelope Garcia. With how caring and loving she is to everyone on the show it offsets all the murder and crime that you see. You can also expect to see her in these crazy outgoing different outfits that she likes to wear.

Another interesting character is Dr. Spencer Reid. Dr. Reid is known on the show for being an absolute genius. He has an Eidetic memory, which means he can remember anything that is said to him, that he sees and that he reads.

He can also read 20,000 words in one minute. In the show by the age of 21 his character has obtained three doctorate degrees, one in mathematics,

one in chemistry and the last one in engineering.

In almost all of the episodes, you can expect the same timeline of events to happen. In the beginning of the show, the team is going to get briefed on a murdering, a kidnapping or any other crime that has happened.

Then they're going to show the team inside of a plane flying to whatever state they are planning on going to.

Also during this time, you'll hear an inspirational quote that they do in every episode.

Upon arriving to the city, they will go to the crime scene or the abduction site and scope it out for any clues that they could find that could lead them back to the suspect.

After that, it's all just trying to find the suspect who committed the crime.

In each episode they do their best to build up anticipation and to draw you in to what is happening.

In some episodes they'll add in a twist. The ending of the episode always has some big event happen where they find the actual criminal, and they try to get them into custody.

But they have to do all sorts of mind games before they can put the handcuffs on the criminal willingly.

They also end each episode the same way that they began, with an inspirational quote.

"Criminal Minds" is available to stream on Netflix and includes the first 12 seasons.

Most listened to songs on Spotify

- Shape of You - Ed Sheeran
- Thinking Out Loud - Ed Sheeran
- Rockstar - Post malone
- Senorita - Shawn Mendes
- One Dance - Drake
- God's Plan - Drake
- Dance Monkey - Tones and I
- Someone You Loved - Lewis Capaldi
- Closer - Chainsmokers
- Bad Guy - Billie Eilish
- Sunflower- Post malone
- Say You Wont Let Go - James Arthur
- Blinding Lights - The weekend
- Perfect - Ed Sheeran

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Sports

GAC announces starting dates for spring 2021

By ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

On Monday, the Great American Conference announced second-semester start dates for basketball, volleyball and women's soccer.

The league's basketball season will feature a 20-game divisional schedule with an opening night slated for Thursday, January 7 with six doubleheaders – Arkansas Tech at Arkansas-Monticello, Southwestern Oklahoma State at East Central, Ouachita at Harding, Southern Arkansas at Henderson State, Southern Nazarene at Northwestern Oklahoma State and Southeastern Oklahoma State at Oklahoma Baptist.

Volleyball features a 10-week, 10-match divisional schedule that opens on Tuesday January 26 and runs through Tuesday March 30. In the opening slate, UAM visits Harding, Ouachita

hosts Arkansas Tech, East Central faces Northwestern Oklahoma State Southern Arkansas travels to Henderson State, defending champion Oklahoma Baptist welcomes in Southeastern Oklahoma State and SWOSU ventures to Southern Nazarene.

Women's soccer gets underway on Saturday, February 20 with three league contests – Southern Nazarene at Ouachita, Oklahoma Baptist at Harding and East Central at Northwestern Oklahoma State. Defending champion Southwestern Oklahoma State hits the field for the first time one week later.

"I can't say enough about the work done by our presidents and administrators to place the GAC in a position to safely resume competition," GAC Commissioner Will Prewitt said. There's a lot of work to be done, and we are keeping our fingers crossed regarding public health conditions across Arkansas and Oklahoma,

but we are hopeful to see the lights go back on for games on January 7."

The conference office also released a fall 2021 football schedule that kicks off a full 11-game round-robin on Thursday, September 2.

Southwestern Oklahoma State hosts the GAC Cross Country Championships on Saturday, February 27. Formats and dates for the men's soccer regular season as well as the championships for basketball, volleyball, and soccer will be determined at a later date.

Members will play spring sports schedules as previously approved by the conference's Council of Athletic Administrators and Council of Presidents.

The GAC will continue to evaluate NCAA, federal, state, and local developments and provide updated revisions as further information becomes available.



Photo provided

The NWOSU volleyball team will get to start their season on Jan. 26. They will play in a 10-week, 10-matchup schedule.



Photo provided

The soccer team's players had a scrimmage against themselves on Nov. 14. It was the red squad versus the white squad.



SERVICE LEARNING/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (SL/CE)

MOST EXPRESSIVE AWARD

Ranger Football

(Make a Wish Gas Pumping Project)

KAYLYN HANSEN
SERVICE LEARNING
COORDINATOR



SLICE
Bringing Faculty, Students and Community Together

Photo provided

The NWOSU football won an award for the Make-A-Wish Gas Pumping Project. The award given to the team was the Most Expressive Award for the team's unique service towards the Alva community. Kayln Hansen gave the football team the award on Nov. 13.

NWOSU football wins award for community service



Photo provided

The NWOSU soccer team players have been practicing against themselves to stay competitive during the pandemic.

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Happy Thanksgiving!
-From Alva's Market

News

Bar patrons don't have to go home, but they can't stay out past 11 p.m. under Stitt's new coronavirus rules

By **JORDAN GREEN**
News Editor

Turn out the lights. The party's over.

Governor Kevin Stitt on Monday ordered the state's bars and restaurants to close no later than 11 p.m. nightly in an effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

In an executive order announced that morning, Stitt ordered establishments to shut down in-person dining by 11 p.m.

each night. He also said restaurants and bars will be required to keep tables at least 6 feet apart from one another unless the tables are separated by sanitary dividers.

Those who visit their favorite saloons after 11 p.m.? They'll be left with nothing but a cup of loneliness.

"These aren't our first actions, and they won't be our last," Stitt said in a news release. "Based on the data in our state — specifically the rise in hospitalizations — now is the time to do more. Each one

of us has a role to play in this fight. I need every Oklahoman to think about what they can do to slow the spread."

Stitt's curfew rules do not apply to drive-through service and curbside pickup service at restaurants.

Oklahoma Restaurant Association CEO Jim Hopper and Chairman Kurt Fleischfresser said they support the governor's new rules.

"We appreciate the leadership of Governor Stitt during these challenging times and the efforts

being made to slow the spread of COVID-19," the two said in a joint statement. "The Oklahoma Restaurant Association and its members want to do our part and at the same time allow our industry to operate safely to protect the health of our employees and customers. We are all in this together, and our industry is ready to do its part."

Stitt's order requires all of the State of Oklahoma's 33,000 employees to wear masks, and all visitors to state-owned buildings

will be required to mask-up.

"The governor and I have said countless times to wear a mask, watch your distance and wash your hands, and it is critical that you do," Oklahoma Commissioner of Health Dr. Lance Frye said. "As we look ahead to Thanksgiving, please don't forget to practice these safety measures. Small things can make a difference, and Oklahomans are encouraged to be mindful of how you gather this holiday season to ensure the safety of your loved ones."

BUSINESSES: Restaurants stay open but close in-person dining



Photo by George Smith

Stores on Flynn Street in downtown Alva are shown in this photo.

Continued from Page 7

people to come and browse our gardening selection outside. We just wanted to get the floors sealed before we let people back into the lobby. Normally, farmers break something and need a replacement for it, like, yesterday, so our job turned into a marathon of running back and forth to customers outside, fixing them up with the right part."

Preston Lowe, assistant production manager for both sets of the Co-op's elevators, said his job was not affected by the shutdown at all.

"Farmers were cutting wheat, and we were going to have to take it one way or another," Lowe said.

The various eating establishments in Alva stayed relatively consistent with sales.

Sonic's general manager, Karen Adams, said Sonic was able to

stay open with relatively no format changes.

Some items on the menu became unavailable because of supply chain shortages.

McDonald's decided to require customers and employees to wear masks inside the building, according to shift manager Trevor Pharris.

The drive-thru stayed open, and the restaurant reduced its hours of operation to give staff more time to clean.

Gambino's Pizza closed its dining room and discontinued its buffet for a short while, yet it stayed open for takeout orders, said Christy Villanueva, the restaurant's general manager.

"Having the buffet closed was where we lost the most money," she said. "A lot of our profits come from having it open."

El Maya started a take-out

only response, but it had to close for the 30-day mandatory shutdown just a few days later.

The restaurant reopened and accommodated half of its full dining capacity to comply with social distancing rules.

The medicinal marijuana dispensary Joint Pains stayed open at both its Alva and Waynoka locations.

The medicinal dispensaries are considered essential businesses along with drug stores and pharmacies.

Averages for unemployment throughout the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, imply that the South is handling the pandemic better economically.

Paychex's Mucci said the South is still No. 1 in job growth, and the construction industry is a major employer.

Northwestern has 44 active COVID-19 cases

By **JORDAN GREEN**
News Editor

Northwestern Oklahoma State University has 44 active cases of the coronavirus, university officials said Nov. 13.

Forty students have the virus, and four university employees have the virus, officials said.

The number of active cases has increased by 12 since Nov. 6, officials reported. The number rose by 13 the week prior.

The total number of positive COVID-19 cases among Northwestern students and employees includes cases at all of the university's campuses in Alva, Enid and Woodward.

Officials first reported on Aug. 28 the number of students who have COVID-19.

At the time, six students had tested positive for it.

To see the number of cases on all campuses, visit <https://www.nwsu.edu/coronavirus/active-covid-19-cases-nwsu>.

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Photos by Leah Darnell

Baptist Collegiate Ministry students came together on Nov. 11 and packed 65 shoeboxes that will be sent to children all over the world. Above: Students pack Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes at the BCM. Top Right: Students packed gloves and balloons, among other items, in the shoeboxes. Bottom Right: Filled shoeboxes are shown on a table in the BCM.