

Press Release: For Immediate Release

Date of Release: Jan. 23, 2013

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### Oklahoma FFA Association Nomination Committee to Meet

The Oklahoma FFA Association Nomination Committee will meet in downtown Oklahoma City Feb. 8 through Feb. 10. Applicant interviews will start at 8 a.m. Feb. 9.

The committee will narrow the Oklahoma state FFA officer applicants to choose the top three candidates for each of FFA's eight state offices. These applicants are high school seniors from all over Oklahoma. The chosen finalists will campaign until the Oklahoma FFA State Convention in May, where they members will elect a new state officer team.

"I think this year we will see a bigger group of state officer candidates than we have in the past because this class is really strong in the south and north both," said Brandon Baumgarten, Oklahoma state FFA president. "We feel that this year will be a really big year for our nomcom team to pick and choose."

The committee is made up of 10 people: five adults and five high school students. Each student is from a different FFA district and is chosen by that district's vice president. The committee members will begin with orientation Friday evening, and will conclude with their final decision Sunday evening. Interviews consist of four parts: a five-minute one-on-one interview between each committee member and applicant; a five-minute interview between the applicant and whole committee; a written test; and a written letter.

The Oklahoma FFA Association is a division of the National FFA Association. The state FFA officer team dedicates their time travelling across Oklahoma to help high school students develop stronger leadership skills. For more information please visit us at [www.okffa.org](http://www.okffa.org).

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Press Release: For Immediate Release

Date of Release: Feb. 4, 2013

Contact: Dalton Downing

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### Alpha Gamma Rho Nominating Committee Workshop

The men of Alpha Gamma Rho will hold a workshop for potential Oklahoma FFA state officer candidates Noble Research Center in Stillwater, Okla., Feb. 2.

The workshop is designed to strengthen the potential officer candidates before next week's Nomination Committee. There will be a workshop over the interview process and speeches. Previous state officers and officer candidates will moderate mock interviews with the candidates.

"The purpose of this clinic is to create a more level playing field among all candidates," said Dalton Downing, workshop coordinator. "We hope that the end product of the seminar is a more qualified and well-developed state officer slate."

Former National FFA president Riley Pagett will be the guest speaker.

Downing said the workshop is provided to all potential candidates free of charge as a philanthropic effort of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity, in conjunction with the volunteer efforts of FFA alumni. Participants may stay at Oklahoma State University's Atherton Hotel, but must make their own reservation and payment. The workshop will adjourn at 2 p.m. Saturday.

Since 1921 Alpha Gamma Rho has dedicated its efforts to build better men at Oklahoma State University. Its members sponsor many community and campus service work. The organization's goals are to maintain high values while "Making Better Men." For more information contact Dalton Downing at [mitchdd@okstate.edu](mailto:mitchdd@okstate.edu).

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## Student Government Presidential Candidates to Debate

Oklahoma State University's Student Government Association will hold their first presidential debate in the Student Union Little Theatre Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. as announced by Temitope Akande at its meeting Feb. 6.

Members of SGA also discussed a possible new attendance policy and winter break extension. Members were also reminded of Camp Cowboy applications and new places students can use their meal plans by Kent Sampson, SGA adviser.

Wednesday night OSU's SGA announced the presidential candidates will debate in the Little Theatre open to anyone interested. Students can submit the questions by sending them in through email to Temitope Akande, University Chair, or tweeting at @OSUSGA. Akande is in charge of receiving the questions and delivering them to the debate.

The questions will not be revealed to candidates prior to debates.

"The reason candidates will not receive the questions before the debate is because it has seemed spontaneity breeds honesty," Akande said.

Senator Dickson did not agree and thought the candidates should be able to prepare their platform to the best of their ability for the students to be best informed.

Akande said questions are not limited to who can send them in. The more diversity of students submitting questions, more subjects will be covered so constituents are more informed.

There will be three total debates held: two presidential and one vice-presidential. The second presidential debate will possibly be live streamed for student convenience. The vice-presidential debate will occur Feb. 19 outside of Kerr-Drummond residential hall.

The candidates for president and vice president are Chacey Schoepel and her running mate Mitchell Earl, Jamie Tate with his running mate Trey Mitchell and Nick Berghall with his running mate Sean Baser.

**New Attendance Policy.** SGA submitted a recommendation for changing OSU's attendance policy for active military students. SGA President Flint Holbrook said when called to duty, military students will have excused absences in any class so it does not affect their grade point average.

Holbrook said the new law will "include veterans or active duty military reserves." SGA recommended it because presently it is an understood law, not actually written out but "the committee heard it and put it in."

Currently professors could fail them or make the class show up as a "W" on their transcript. Holbrook said the committee "already approved it or will approve it this week."

**Winter Break Extension.** OSU Senate got their recommendation approved to be heard by the OSU committee to extend students' winter break into four weeks instead of three. This would prolong the spring semester by one week.

**Camp Cowboy.** Camp Cowboy Wrangler applications are due Feb. 22. There are seven sessions of camp. All students are encouraged to apply and can pick which sessions are best for their schedule. They do not have to work all sessions.

**Meal Plan Usage.** Express It, a new convenience store in Stillwater, will accept student's meal plans. However, they do not sell beer or cigarettes.

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Oklahoma State University Collegiate FFA Invitational Speech Contest

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Oklahoma State University Collegiate FFA Invitational Speech Contest took place at Oklahoma State University's Stillwater campus April 1.

This contest is important to Oklahoma FFA members because it gives them a chance to start their speech season early, said Bailey Kliewer, Collegiate FFA president. Also, it allows the CASNR students who were involved in the organization a chance to give back.

"We chose to begin this contest last year as a joint effort to not only raise money for Collegiate FFA to fund our events, but also to allow the students to begin giving speeches and getting critiques earlier in the season," said Colby Gregg, OSU Collegiate FFA vice-president.

Collegiate FFA invited all 352 Oklahoma FFA Chapters, Kliewer said. This amounts to around 25,000 students who are enrolled in Oklahoma FFA, said Kent Boggs, Oklahoma FFA Association executive secretary. However, only 60 to 70 members entered this year, Gregg said.

"This contest was a fantastic way to start off the speech season," said Kaylen Baker, State FFA reporter. "It started it off the same place it finishes it - at OSU. Being in the same place that the state finals take place, it gives the members a visual goal to get back here."

Kliewer said the contest was held in OSU's Classroom Building. Awards followed in the Student Union Ballroom. Contestants that preregistered paid \$3 to enter, while contestants that entered on site had to pay \$5. To pre-enter members signed up on [judgingcard.com](http://judgingcard.com).

Students that placed 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> in their respective categories received a medallion, Kliewer said. There were 11 speaking categories: animal science, plant science, natural resources, agribusiness, agricultural policy, agriscience, FFA creed, extemporaneous, 8<sup>th</sup> grade agricultural exploration, 9<sup>th</sup> grade FFA opportunities and 8-9-10<sup>th</sup> grade general agriculture.

This contest was hosted by Collegiate FFA, but co-sponsored by CASNR Student Council. Renting the Student Union Ballroom was free, but the awards cost \$100 and equipment was a \$35 expense, Gregg said.

Kliewer said the judges were OSU students who volunteer their time. Primarily Collegiate FFA tries to get judges from within CASNR. The majority was agricultural education majors, or students who are regularly involved in Collegiate FFA.

“It gave our agricultural education majors a chance to see what happens on the other side of the speech contest, which will in turn help them serve as better teachers when they get out into the real world,” Gregg said.

Gregg said this is only the second annual contest, but Collegiate FFA hopes to continue it and help out Oklahoma FFA as much as they can.

For more information, contact Bailey Kliewer at [bailey.kliewer@okstate.edu](mailto:bailey.kliewer@okstate.edu) or Colby Gregg at [colby.gregg@okstate.edu](mailto:colby.gregg@okstate.edu).

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## **Oklahoma State University Agricultural Economics Scholarship Banquet**

Oklahoma State University's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Agricultural Economics Department will host its annual scholarship banquet at 5 p.m., April 13, in the Wes Watkins Center in Stillwater, Okla.

Joshua Conaway, an agribusiness student at OSU, said the banquet is a great way to meet and learn about scholarship donors.

"They enjoy it, also," Conaway said of the scholarship donors. "I have had many donors tell me how much they like being able to put a name with a face when it comes to the scholarships they have donated."

"Approximately 100 scholarships are awarded annually to undergraduate students, with this year's total being 106," said Anna Whitney, agricultural economics student service specialist. "Students can be awarded more than one. This year 72 students will receive recognition at the banquet Saturday."

The total amount of scholarships that were awarded this year was \$98,625, with each scholarship ranging from \$250 to \$2,500, Whitney said.

"The money awarded comes from various donors who are alumni, family and friends of the department," said Damona Doye, Agricultural Economics Department acting head. "It can be donated from individuals, organizations or businesses."

Scholarships are given based on certain criteria, Doye said. However, each scholarship has a different criteria. Academic performance, campus involvement, demonstrated leadership, financial need and students' work status are all considered when awarding scholarships, Doye said.

"I personally am very thankful for these scholarships," Conaway said. "Thanks to them, I have money to buy those expensive books for next semester."

These scholarships are a way for donors to invest in current students and also pay back the university for support they may have received while attending OSU, Doye said.

“Scholarships help make college more affordable for students,” Doye said. “They may allow students to work fewer hours and concentrate more on studies or be more involved in leadership and service activities. Having good scholarship support is also important to CASNR and OSU as it helps us compete for good students nationwide.”

For more information on the scholarship banquet, how to become a scholarship donor or when applications are available, contact Anna Whiney by email at [anna.whitney@okstate.edu](mailto:anna.whitney@okstate.edu) or by phone at 405-744-8210.

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## 2013 Oklahoma FFA Association State Convention

A sea of Oklahoma FFA members will take over downtown Oklahoma City, Okla., for the 87<sup>th</sup> Oklahoma FFA Association State Convention April 30 through May 1 at the Cox Convention Center.

“This convention allows Oklahoma FFA members to be recognized for their hard work throughout the year,” said Kent Boggs, Oklahoma FFA executive secretary. “It also is a great opportunity for them to learn more leadership skills through the keynote speakers, workshops and competition.”

“One of the highlights of the convention is the workshops,” said Brandon Baumgarten, Oklahoma FFA state president. “They will teach you how to be a captain on the leadership.”

Members can choose from 14 workshops, Baumgarten said.

Workshop presenters will be just as “super great” as always, Boggs said.

Blake Vineyard and Tyler Reiley, Texas FFA state president and first vice president, Joenelle Futrell, National FFA Organization eastern region vice president and Sam Glenn are just some of the prestigious presenters this year, Boggs said.

The keynote speakers will “leave you speechless,” Baumgarten said. These speakers include Justin Flom, Judson Laipply and Brooks Gibbs, Baumgarten said.

Pre-session entertainment will include magician David Harris plus iLuminate, a Hollywood dance company that placed third on season six of *America’s Got Talent*, Boggs said. Also, Dustin Lynch will be in concert Tuesday night, Boggs said.

“The workshops and keynote speakers are great,” said Katey Rowland, Silo FFA member. “However, to me, state convention is important because it allows members to reunite with their FFA family and show off their accomplishments throughout the year. It also gives many members a spark to get more involved in the phenomenal organization.”

Members will compete in the state speak-off that declares who will represent Oklahoma at the National FFA Convention in October, Boggs said. Each of the nine division winners will speak in front of three judges. The winner will be announced at the third general session Wednesday morning, he said.

State convention would not be successful without the service of volunteer workers, Boggs said. Approximately 100 people from across Oklahoma help; about 50 are students from Oklahoma State University or the various junior colleges around Oklahoma, he said.

“Oklahoma State University and FFA collaborate on many levels,” Boggs said. “We gain a great amount of support from OSU for all of our events and they take such good care of our state officers through scholarships and schedules. They benefit because many of our students are likely to be interested in an agricultural related degree so they get a lot of recruiting opportunities from FFA events.”

State convention costs a total of \$750,000, Boggs said. This money comes mostly from sponsorships like Blue & Gold Sausage Co., Chesapeake Energy, Ford Motor Company and Farm Credit of Oklahoma, plus many more individual and company donations, he said.

For more information or to purchase a concert ticket, contact the agricultural education division of Oklahoma Department of CareerTech at 405-743-5498.

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