

Campus Update

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Chickasaw citizen Dan Hays honored with statue on ECU campus



SEE HAYS Page 2



Fall 2026 starts strong
as Tigers return to
campus!

SEE FALL Page 8

East Central University President Wendell
Godwin named Education Insider's "Top 10
University Presidents - 2026."



Miss Native American ECU
speaks on panel

SEE PANEL, Page 5

President's Leadership
Class of 2026 Announced

SEE PLC, Page 15

NASNTI REACHE
leaves lasting impact

SEE NASNTI Page 4

HAYS

From Page 1

Through a partnership with the Chickasaw Nation, ECU officially unveiled a brand-new Dan Hays bronze statue, by sculptor James Blackburn, to an expectant crowd of dignitaries, guests, and various community members in the Bill S. Cole University Center Courtyard, August 28.

In 1909, Chickasaw Citizen Dan Hays donated 16 acres of his land to help establish a new teacher-training institution in Ada. The institution, East Central State Normal School, would eventually become East Central University.

Hays was born Sept. 7, 1874, in the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, to Tom St. John and Sarah Hays. He farmed and raised livestock on his allotment throughout his life and married Benetta "Etta" Ford in December 1904.

Following approval by Oklahoma Gov. Charles N. Haskell for three new normal schools in the state, Hays offered his own land as the site for the new school in Ada. His only stipulation was that he be allowed to continue living in the native-stone home he had built on the property.

That school opened as East Central State Normal School, one of Oklahoma's original normal schools established to prepare teachers for the young state's growing educational system.

The significance of Hays' gift was recognized immediately.

A May 6, 1909, article in the Ada Evening News, written by Col. E. H. Lucas, praised the proposed location at the eastern end of East Main Street.

"The acceptance of the proposed site will mean that the normal school would be located in that magnificent location," Lucas wrote, describing the view as one that "could not be more excellent."

The school would grow and evolve with Oklahoma, eventually becoming East Central State College before achieving university status as East Central University

Through those changes, the institution has remained connected to the community and region Hays helped establish it in more than a century ago.



ECU President Wendell Godwin with Chickasaw Nation Governor Chris Anokatubby



Scott Linn

The East Central University Foundation Board of Directors has selected Scott Linn to serve as the organization's next chief executive officer.

Linn, an ECU alumnus and the Foundation's current chief advancement officer, will succeed President Emeritus John R. Hargrave, who has led the Foundation since 2018.

The official leadership transition will take place during the ECU Foundation Annual Meeting Tuesday, Oct. 27 in Foundation Hall inside the Chickasaw Business and Conference Center.

As CEO, Linn will lead the ECU Foundation's fundraising, donor engagement and advancement efforts while working closely with university leadership and the Foundation Board of Directors. He will oversee fundraising initiatives designed to expand scholarship support, strengthen academic and campus programs and create meaningful opportunities for alumni and friends to invest in ECU's future.

For more information, visit ecok.edu/news.



Kaycee Logsdon named new ECU Choir Director

The East Central University Department of Performing Arts has named Kaycee Logsdon as the new Director of Choir.

“We are excited to welcome our new Choir Director, Kaycee Logsdon, to East Central University,” said ECU’s Director of Bands and Percussion, Dr. Nick Meyers. “Kaycee brings a wealth of choral and vocal experience to ECU, along with a passion for music education and performance.”

Originally from Broken

Arrow, Okla., Logsdon received a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Central Missouri, a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Texas Tech University and is currently working toward a Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting at the University of Oklahoma with an emphasis in sacred music.

In addition to her studies, Logsdon currently serves as the Associate Artistic Director of the Tulsa Chorale and is a staff

singer at Saint John’s Episcopal Church.

Logsdon has been singing professionally for 25 years with ensembles in Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Kansas, New York and Connecticut, performing in some of the world’s most prestigious venues, from Carnegie Hall to Westminster Abbey.

She officially assumed her role as Director of Choir, August, 2026.

Dr. Germain Pichop of East Central University’s Harland C. Stonecipher School of Business has recently been named the new chairman of the board of directors for the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), a global business education accrediting body and the first organization to offer accreditation to all levels of collegiate business educational degree programs from associate to doctoral.

“Dr. Pichop’s appointment as Chairman of the ACBSP Board of Directors is both a personal achievement and a significant milestone for the Stonecipher School of Business,” said Dr. Michael Scott, Dean for the Harland C. Stonecipher School of Business.

For more information on Dr. Pichop’s accomplishments, visit ecok.edu/news.

Dr. Germain Pichop named Chairman of the Board of Directors for ACBSP



SAVE THE DATE

10.15.26

To register for the event, visit okainstitute.org.

NASNTI

From Page 1

The NASNTI REACHE Program at East Central University leaves behind a lasting legacy of transformative support for the university, students, staff, faculty and community.

ECU has been home to the Native American-Serving Nontribal Institution (NASNTI) Program since receiving its first \$2 million grant in 2011. Over the years, the program provided Native American and Pell-eligible students with research internships, faculty mentoring, employment, advising, tutoring, distance learning resources and other opportunities designed to reduce barriers to academic success.

The most recent grant, NASNTI REACHE (Resources to Enhance Achievement and Completion in Higher Education), strengthened partnerships across campus to connect students with academic, financial, career, health and other support services. The program also partnered with Native American Tribes and community organizations to promote outreach and

cultural engagement, including ECU's annual Tribal Summit.

Students participated in experiential learning opportunities across the country, including visits to tribal lands and reservations and an Indigenous Alternative Spring Break experience in Hawaii.

"I can't overstate the significance of NASNTI to East Central University," said Dr. Jeffrey Gibson, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. "Not only has it provided direct support to our Native American and Pell-eligible students for over a decade, but it has also supported institutional initiatives in faculty development, campus technology, and academic infrastructure that will continue to have a positive impact on our entire student body well into the future."

NASNTI also made significant investments in campus facilities. Linscheid Library received hundreds of thousands of dollars in support since 2017, helping fund study rooms, a Digital Humanities Lab, Active Learning Center,



recording studio, technology, expanded collections and improved furnishings.

"NASNTI has had a major impact on the resources and services that Linscheid Library has been able to provide," said Dana Belcher, director of Linscheid Library. "The program has been instrumental in enhancing the use of the library, contributing to a 31% increase from last year."

Additional support benefited the Chickasaw Business and Conference Center and other

university facilities, expanding access to modern, student-centered learning environments.

Through sustained investment in students, infrastructure and cultural engagement, NASNTI has strengthened ECU and created opportunities that will continue to benefit the university community for years to come.

For more information on the NASNTI Programs impact at ECU, visit ecok.edu/news.

ECU and ECU Foundation represented at the annual OCPRA 2026 conference



East Central University's Office of Communications and Marketing and the ECU Foundation brought home nine awards from the annual Oklahoma College Public Relations Association (OCPRA) conference this summer.

Creative Specialist Tanner Capps received four awards, Marketing Specialist Bridges Velarde received two and Director of Alumni Relations Jessica Sanchez received two.

Also credited on each of the projects that received recognition was ECU Foundation Secretary Sadie Stonecipher, Marketing Communications Specialist Gabriel Rosalez and Web Specialist Stephanie Brogdon.

Miss Native American ECU 2026-27, Gabrielle Nucosee, was a featured panelist at the 2026 Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference.

Nucosee participated in the conference's Next Generation Panel alongside University of Oklahoma student Sophie Mater and College Park High School student Landri Von Gonten.

The panel was moderated by Chickasaw citizen Cyndee Miller and explored issues affecting young adults, particularly First American women. Topics included overcoming barriers to success, confronting fear, navigating underestimation and embracing opportunities.

In addition to Nucosee, ECU was represented by several alumni at the event as panelists, moderators and speakers, including Ashley Fish, Rita (Willis) Hart, Dr. Shondra McCage and Francine Parchcorn.



Vocal Music student pursues dream in NYC

East Central University vocal music student Adam Park performed in the Comeback Cabaret at Don't Tell Mama, located in New York City's famous Theatre District in early August.

The Comeback Cabaret is a recurring New York City musical revue that celebrates emerging performers, musical theatre artists and songwriters. The showcase features a rotating cast of approximately 10 to 15 performers in each production, providing an opportunity for new talent to perform at Don't Tell Mama, one of the city's most recognizable cabaret venues.

Park is an active member of both the ECU Choir and the ECU Showtime Show Choir, and audiences have seen him perform in numerous university theatre and musical productions. He was also selected to perform the National Anthem during East Central University's Fall 2025 Commencement ceremony.

Oklahoma Business Week brings ingenuity and creativity to ECU

The Stonecipher School of Business at East Central University kicked off Summer 2026 with the return of Oklahoma Business Week (OBW).

OBW is an annual event that gives high school students the opportunity to spend five days on ECU's campus, including overnight stays in the dorms, while participating in a series of activities and competitions in the Chickasaw Business and Conference Center and across campus.

For the 2026 OBW, the team designated Super Awesome Business Squad placed runner-up with Violet Vision placing first in the competition.

Super Awesome Business Squad included:

Dylan Nguyen – Edmond, Okla.

Warren Plunk – Oklahoma City, Okla.

Leslie Walters – Ada, Okla.

Madison Zeigler - Lawton, Okla.

Laila Colina – Muskogee, Okla.

Piper Robison – Sweetwater, Okla.

Violet Vision included:

Buddy Abney – Stratford, Okla.

Thomas Gillenwater – Oklahoma City, Okla.

Breanna Larson – Grove, Okla.

Taylor Spaulding – Vanoss, Okla.

Danielle Botes – Salado, Texas

Isabella McCoy – Lawton, Okla.

Lillian Harper – Ada, Okla.

Each member of the winning team received a \$1,000 ECU scholarship, as well as a laptop, while the members of the runner-up team received a \$500 scholarship and an Owala water bottle.

For more information on OBW 2026, visit ecok.edu/news.



ECU Russian Club takes part in once-in-a-lifetime tour of Prague and Bratislava

Over the summer, 12 students and alumni from East Central University's Russian Club, along with Director of Global Education, Dr. Mara Sukholutskaya, traveled

to Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, and Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. For more information on the ECU Russian Club's exploits, visit ecok.edu/news.

ECU shines at Sovereignty Symposium 2026

The 38th Sovereignty Symposium was held in June at OKANA Resort in Oklahoma City. Ten East Central University faculty and students attended to hear panels and speeches by leading scholars and practitioners of federal Indian law.

ECU Legal Studies major Nathan Sheppard won first place in the Blue Clark Student Poster Competition for his research entitled "The Impact of the McGirt and Castro Huerta Rulings on Legal Deserts in Eastern Oklahoma." ECU Legal Studies students Sam Kreis

and Raechel Simpson's posters were also selected as finalists in the competition.

Dr. Christine Pappas, professor of Political Science and director of Policy and Education for The Oka Institute, was selected to present comments on tribal water policy. Jacintha Webster, associate professor of Legal Studies and director of the Native American Legal Clinic at ECU chaired a panel called "Justice Delayed or Denied? Access to Justice in Tribal Communities."

ECU Tiger Esports and Oklahoma Chess Association bring official tournament to campus

The East Central University (ECU) Tiger Esports Director Cody Soden collaborated with the Oklahoma Chess Association to bring an official tournament to the ECU campus.

The Roaring Tiger Open took place August 15 inside ECU's North Lounge.

Thirty players participated in the four-round, U.S. Chess-rated and over-the-board tournament, which was a G/45;d5 format, meaning each player starts with 45 minutes on the clock to complete the game and there is a 5-second delay for every single move.

Prize trophies were presented for all plus scores (2.5+) as well as a trophy to the top scholastic player rated 0–1200.

Following the event, Soden offered a shoutout, “to all the students, local community members, and competitors who came out to showcase their strategic firepower. The energy in the room was phenomenal!”



Employee Appreciation cookouts took place on campus over the summer, sponsored by Citizens Bank of Ada, First United Bank of Ada and Vision Bank.



Staff and Faculty Convocation signals start of new semester

East Central University President Wendell Godwin spoke alongside Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Jeffrey Gibson, Executive Vice President of Administration & Finance Darrell Morrison, Vice President of the Office of Enrollment Management Dr. Denver Stickrod and Athletic Director Matt Cole about the current state of the university, exciting updates on facility repairs, news on the Dan Hays STEM Center and what to expect coming into the Fall 2026 semester.

Bridges out of Poverty simulation brought to ECU, organized by I-DREAM

Bridges out of Poverty is a structured, interactive experience designed to help participants better understand the challenges faced by individuals and families living in poverty.

The simulation was facilitated by the Chickasaw Nation Training Department and organized by ECU's I-DREAM Grant for the ECU Education Department's pre-service teachers and other interested students.

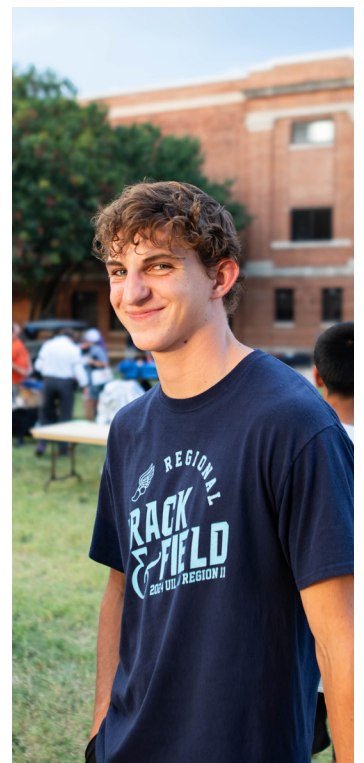
Campus comes alive as Tigers return to ECU



From move-in day to Mall Crawl, Howdy Fair, a magic show and much more, first-time freshmen and returning Tigers have been active and excited all across campus this month!











First students arrive inside the brand-new Dan Hays STEM Center



ECU welcomes new faculty to campus for Fall 2026

Dr. Assad Abbas; Assistant Professor for the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science.

Abbas earned his Bachelor of Science from the University of the Punjab in Lahore, Pakistan; his Master of Computer Science from the University of Arid Agriculture in Rawalpindi, Pakistan; his Master of Science in Informatics from the University of Skövde in Sweden; and his Doctor of Philosophy in Electrical and Computer Engineering from North Dakota State University, USA.

Dr. Kelly Berry; Assistant Professor for Native American Studies.

Berry (Plains Apache, Kiowa, Choctaw) earned his Bachelor of Science in Sociology from the University of Oklahoma, his Master of Public Health in Preparedness and Terrorism Response from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and his Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Kansas State University.

Rhyley Brewer; Instructor for the School of Nursing.

Brewer is a Registered Nurse with more than six years of experience in maternal-child care, obstetrics, newborn care and patient education. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from East Central University and a Master of Science in Nursing Education at Oklahoma City University.

Marcy Carnes; Clinical Instructor for the School of Nursing.

Science degree from Seminole State College and her Bachelor of Science

in Nursing from East Central University. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing Education from Northeastern State University.

Haley Gibson; Assistant Professor for the Harland C. Stonecipher School of Business.

Gibson earned her Bachelor of Science in English and Master of Science in Post-Secondary Education in Teaching English to Students of Other Languages (TESOL) from Troy University and her Doctor of Education in Higher Education Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Jacye Jamar; Assistant Professor for the Department of Education.

Jamar earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Master's degrees in Public School Administration and School Counseling from East Central University, and her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of North Texas.

Abigail Nixon; Assistant Professor of Counseling for the Professional Programs in Human Services.

Nixon earned her Bachelor of Arts

in Multidisciplinary Studies with a Social Issues emphasis and her Master of Human Relations in Counseling from the University of Oklahoma before earning her Doctor of Education in Community Care and Counseling from Liberty University.

Melisa Smith; Instructor for the Department of Education.

Smith earned her Master of Education from East Central University, her Master of Arts in English Studies from Arizona State University and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership at East Central University.

Jeannie Thomas; Visiting Professor and Simulation Consultant for the School of Nursing.

Thomas earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from East Central University, her Master of Science in Nursing Education from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and her Doctor of Nursing Practice with a Nurse Leader focus and Education Certificate from Samford University.

For more information about ECU's newest faculty, visit ecok.edu/news.





ECU President's Leadership Class of 2026 announced

East Central University President Wendell Godwin has announced the students selected for the 2026-27 President's Leadership Class (PLC).

PLC is one of ECU's premier freshmen scholarship programs, comprised of high-achieving students who demonstrated strong leadership skills in high school.

Each year, 20-25 students are selected for the program. PLC members engage with campus, community and state leaders, as well as volunteer at local schools and events. They also participate in exclusive leadership seminars, retreats and service projects and travel to major U.S. cities to expand their understanding of leadership and civic engagement. This year's class trip will be a visit to Washington D.C.

ECU's PLC is supported by title sponsor Vision Bank, whose partnership helps sustain and expand leadership development opportunities for ECU students.

Through its investment in the program, Vision Bank supports initiatives that provide students with hands-on leadership experiences, mentorship opportunities and educational travel designed to prepare them for success in their careers and communities.

The selected students represent communities from across Oklahoma:

Aavri Noel, Allie Foster, Briley Brundidge, Cara Idlett, Charlotte Haws, Ezekiel Griffin, Hannabella Maddox, Jada Faulkner, Jet Smith, Kayle Watson, Kylie Dooney, Liam McMahan, Nicole Gehring, Paige Wainscott, Presley Newcomb, Reagan Dominic, Reese Moore, Savannah Patrick, Tejumojesu (Faith) Adegbule and Trevor Toyen.

For more information on ECU's 2026 President's Leadership Class, visit ecok.edu/news.



Award-Winning debut novelist Katie Yee visits East Central University

The East Central University Honors Program and the Ross-Osborn Honors Authors Series welcomed Brooklyn native Katie Yee to campus to discuss her 2025 debut novel, *Maggie; Or, A Man and a Woman Walk into a Bar*.

The New York Times named Yee's novel to its list of 100 Notable Books of 2025, and Barnes and Noble named it the winner of its 2025 Discover prize for the "Best New Author" published in 2025. It was also included on summer reading lists from Time, Oprah Daily, The Washington Post, New York, Today, ELLE, and Harper's Bazaar.

Yee spoke to students from the ECU Honors Program and beyond, along with staff, faculty and community members who attended the free event inside the Estep Multimedia Center.

Afterwards, Yee visited with the guests, answering questions and signing copies of her book.

