



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA
2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

UCO FAST FACTS

119 Undergraduate
Majors

80 Graduate
Majors

13,000+
Students

1,350 Full-Time
Faculty and Staff

NATIONAL & LOCAL RECOGNITION

UCO Receives Recognition for Social Mobility

CollegeNET ranked Central among the top higher education institutions in the nation for social mobility, according to its recent national ranking. UCO ranked No. 183 out of nearly 1,500 colleges and universities in the U.S. according to their contribution to economic mobility, placing Central in the top 12% in the nation. Rankings were determined based on the Social Mobility Index, which measures to what extent a higher education institution accepts students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and graduates them into well-paying jobs, according to factors such as cost of attendance, economic background of the student body, graduation rates and early-career salaries.



Central Receives Broadway World Awards

The UCO College of Fine Arts and Design (CFAD) won several awards for its musical theatre and theatre arts productions, as part of the 2020 Broadway World Regional Awards, for the Oklahoma region. Broadway World is a New York City-based theatre news website. This year's awards were given in the Best of the Decade categories, representing productions over the past 10 years. Central's winners included "Tribes" (2019) for Best Ensemble; Ryan Steer, in "Nine" (2020), for Dancer of the Decade; and, "Radium Girls" (2020) for Top Streaming Production/Performance.

UCO Recognized for 'Expert Response' in 2020

Great Value Colleges ranked Central No. 28 in the nation on its list of "30 U.S. Colleges That Handled The Crises of 2020 Well." The ranking is based on evidence of a college keeping on-campus coronavirus cases low, making significant changes to promote racial justice and having strong overall university strategies at the start of 2021. The ranking recognized Central for its shift to virtual learning and its ongoing commitment to making transformative learning more equal. UCO joins other notable schools on the list, such as Howard, Rice, Brown, Princeton, Cornell, Georgetown and Harvard Universities.



NATIONAL & LOCAL RECOGNITION

UCO Forensic Science Degree Ranked Top in Nation

Study.com ranked Central's bachelor's degree in forensic science as the top degree program of its kind in the nation. Out of the top 34 programs on the list, UCO came in first, named as "the most interdisciplinary, comprehensive and open-ended forensic science undergraduate program" for allowing students to craft their own course of study alongside another related degree and earn two distinct bachelor's degrees upon graduation. Schools were ranked based on their offering of comprehensive curricula in both physical sciences and the criminal justice system, accessibility, affordability, internship and research opportunities, faculty expertise and extracurricular opportunities.



Central Recognized for Top Training Graduate Program

Great Business Schools ranked UCO No. 16 on its list of "25 Best Master's in Training and Development for 2021." Programs were ranked based on cost, salary potential and student satisfaction. Central's M.Ed. in Adult and Higher Education, with a concentration in talent development, was highlighted for preparing its students to work as educational consultants, administrators of adult education programs, business and industry trainers, as well as adult and higher education teachers.

Addictions Counseling Degree Ranked Nationally

AddictionCounselor.org ranked Central as a top institution in the nation for its Master of Arts in addictions counseling, placing UCO as No. 44 out of 50. Central is the only higher education institution in the state recognized on the list. Programs were ranked according to the program's retention rate, graduate rate, cost and student-to-faculty ratio.



Central Named Certified Healthy Campus

UCO again was named a Certified Healthy Campus for the ninth consecutive year. A part of the "Shape Your Future" campaign, driven by the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Central was awarded the highest level of certification, receiving the excellence designation. The campaign recognizes public and private campuses and career technology centers that make a positive impact on the health of their communities.

Central Receives \$2.9 Million for Bilingual Education

The UCO College of Education and Professional Studies received a \$2.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to fund a new project to promote bilingual education initiatives in Oklahoma City schools. The new program, called "NEXUS," is designed to improve educational services for English learners (ELs) and will provide funding for teacher professional development, language and literacy programs for EL students and parents, increased diversity and equity trainings for school administrators and more. In addition to professional development at local schools, the grant will help fund two cohorts of 20 teachers to complete coursework in UCO's Master of Education in bilingual education/teaching English to speakers of other languages (BE/TESOL) program.



UCO MPA Receives NASPAA Accreditation

Central has earned a seven-year accreditation from the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) for its Master of Public Administration (MPA). The accreditation puts UCO's MPA in an elite group—Central is one of only two institutions in Oklahoma to be accredited, and one of 208 programs globally. During the site visit by The Commission of Peer Review and Accreditation, the university received four commendations and two notices of exemplary practice. The university was acknowledged for breakthrough practices related to diversity, equity and inclusion. The evaluation team commented that the UCO MPA is "a shining example of what a mission achieving public administration graduate program can and should be."

UCO Students Place First in Regional Competition

A team of three UCO undergraduate students majoring in public health recently took first place in the 2021 National Case Study Competition in Health Education regional competition (NCSCHE). Nine teams from eight universities competed in the event. The UCO team will compete in the national competition in spring 2022. During the competition, students used research and public health theory to solve a community-based public health case without assistance from outside resources. The projects were judged by a panel of national health experts using criteria based on the competencies required of a certified health education specialist.



FACULTY AND STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

UCO Names Charlotte Simmons as Provost

Central President Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar named Charlotte Simmons, Ph.D., as the university's provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. Prior to assuming the position, Simmons served as the co-interim vice president for Academic Affairs. In 2015, she was appointed associate vice president for Academic Affairs, previously serving the university and the College of Mathematics and Science as tenured faculty, chairperson of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, associate dean and dean.



Cowan Named Assistant Dean

UCO named J. Sunshine Cowan, Ph.D., professor of kinesiology and health studies, as assistant dean of its Jackson College of Graduate Studies. Cowan brings experience in both graduate and undergraduate studies to the new role, where she will work alongside current graduate college leadership to advance the university's quality initiative and the new first-year experience. Cowan has served on the University Core Curriculum Committee, Academic Affairs Curriculum Council, UConnnect Online Course Evaluation Committee, Healthy Campus Leadership Team and the Transformative Learning Steering Committee.



Provencio Named New Director of Leadership Minor

The UCO College of Liberal Arts named Alyssa Provencio, Ph.D., the new director of the leadership minor at Central. Provencio, an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science, serves as president of the Latino Faculty and Staff Association and on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)/Undocumented Student Task Force. Additionally, she has contributed to many interdisciplinary programs at UCO and currently is sponsoring a proposal for an undergraduate major in disaster management. UCO's leadership minor, established in fall 2006, provides students with a foundation for modeling effective change and can be tailored to fit any degree program.



Atkins Selected for Early Childhood Success Committee

The Oklahoma Secretary of Human Services Justin Brown selected LaDonna Atkins, Ed.D., professor in the UCO Department of Human Environmental Services, to serve on the research committee for the newly established Oklahoma Clearinghouse for Early Childhood Success. Launched in December 2020, the clearinghouse will establish new initiatives and promote practices to improve the overall well-being for children and their families in the state. Atkins' role on the committee will include prioritizing outcomes and recommending research-informed practices to meet the needs of the Oklahoma early childhood system.



FACULTY AND STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Central Names Oller as New Dean

UCO has named Jeremy Oller, J.D., Ph.D., as dean of the College of Business, effective June 1, 2021. Oller has served as the college's interim dean since January 2020. Since arriving at Central in 2005, Oller attained tenure and the rank of professor in the Department of Economics, in addition to serving as chairperson from 2012-20. Oller has accumulated many accolades since joining Central, including the College of Business Excellence in Teaching Award (2009), the Vanderford Distinguished Teacher Award (2009), the College of Business Exemplary Service Award (2012) and the Business Excellence Award for Teaching (2013).



DaVinci Institute Recognizes Central Professor

The DaVinci Institute, Oklahoma's creativity think tank, named Lindsay Churchill, Ph.D., an associate professor in the UCO College of Liberal Arts, as a 2020 DaVinci Fellow. The award recognizes higher education faculty whose creative, innovative accomplishments have made a significant contribution to their academic disciplines. Churchill is being recognized for her excellent accomplishments in creating and directing the UCO Women's Research Center and BGLTQ+ Student Center. As a recipient, she will receive a \$1,000 grant to apply toward a creative project of her choosing.

Central Names Art Cotton as Vice President

UCO President Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar recently named Art Cotton as the university's vice president for Advancement and president of the UCO Foundation, effective July 1, 2021. Cotton brings 30 years of experience to the vice president role. He previously served as senior director of development at the Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation, vice president for University Advancement and External Relations at Oklahoma City University, vice president for development at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, senior director of major gifts for the Oklahoma State University Foundation, chief of staff for the lieutenant governor of Oklahoma, manager of business development and marketing for the Benham Group and associate director for the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.



Central Wins Big at OCPRA Annual Awards

Central marketing, public relations, graphic design and communication professionals from across campus took home 23 awards at the 2021 Oklahoma Collegiate Public Relations Association (OCPRA) awards ceremony in July. UCO's winning entries included nine Grand Awards, seven Excellence Awards, six Achievement Awards and one Honorable Mention. Awards went to projects submitted by University Communications, Campus Enterprises, Employee Relations, Jackson College of Graduate Studies and Photographic Services. OCPRA received more than 400 entries in 41 categories from 17 institutions across the state.

STUDENT ACCOLADES

Pro Media Students Place at National Competition

Two Central students placed second at the Broadcast Education Association's (BEA) annual Festival of Media Arts competition at its virtual event in March. The BEA awarded Central's UCentral News second place in the TV newscast category, specifically naming Amanda Siew, a professional media major from Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, and Kyle Tangco, a senior professional media major from Edmond, Oklahoma, for their work as producer and director of the honored newscast. The 2021 Best of Festival winners were selected from a pool of over 1,300 entries, representing over 250 colleges and universities from around the country in the following competitions: audio, documentary, film and video, interactive multimedia, news, scriptwriting, sports and two-year colleges.



UCO Public Health Students Place First

A team of three Central undergraduate students, majoring in public health, took first place in the 2021 National Case Study Competition in Health Education (NCSCHE). Fifteen teams from 11 universities competed in the event. Team members included Kennedy Rozneck, public health senior from Edmond, Oklahoma; Rachel Walker, a public health senior from Tahlequah, Oklahoma; and, LaKala Williams, a public health senior from Tulsa, Oklahoma.

DaVinci Institute Recognizes Central Students

The DaVinci Institute, Oklahoma's creativity think tank, named two Central students DaVinci Scholars. Dawn McRoberts, from Yukon, Oklahoma, earned the recognition of a 2020 DaVinci Scholar and a \$1,000 grant for her project proposal that will create a school garden. Through the project, children will be able to learn where their food comes from, as well as sample fruits and vegetables harvested from it. Christina Sundly, a senior elementary education major from Choctaw, Oklahoma, earned the recognition of a 2021 DaVinci Scholar and a \$1,000 grant for her project proposal that will provide a schoolwide family STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) night.



UCO Students Honored at Journalism Awards

Amanda Siew, a Central professional media spring 2021 graduate from Selangor, Malaysia, received the Student Broadcaster of the Year award for her work with UCentral News at the annual Great Plains Journalism Awards in May. In addition to Siew, UCO students Ashley Jones, a senior professional media major from Oklahoma City; Jay Mayes, a spring 2020 professional media graduate from Vian, Oklahoma; and, Mikala Novitsky, a fall 2020 professional media graduate from Midwest City, Oklahoma, were honored as finalists for the Best University Newscast award. The regional competition included more than 600 entries, with winners and finalists named in 73 professional and student categories.

STUDENT ACCOLADES

Central Rowing Wins National Championship

The UCO rowing team won its third consecutive national championship, winning the fours national title for the second season in a row and winning the eights national title for the fourth consecutive season. With their two wins, Central earned a maximum 20 team points, claiming the national team championship title. Additionally, Brian Ebke, UCO's head rowing coach, was named NCAA Division II Coach of the Year by the Collegiate Rowing Coaches Association.



UCO Students Win Big at Love's Cup



Central students from the College of Fine Arts and Design, the College of Business and the College of Liberal Arts celebrated success at the Oklahoma Love's Entrepreneur Cup Business Plan Competition. Four students from Central's School of Design, as part of the team Amidad, brought home first place in the Small Business Division. Amidad is an app-based concept that provides undocumented immigrants and refugees with guides on understanding their legal rights during arrests, as well as a device to summon help if confronted by U.S. Immigration and Customs officers. In addition to Amidad's success, Central's team, Hamkke, an application that helps parents or guardians talk to children about sex education, providing sex education that is intuitive, interactive and age-appropriate, won second place in the Small Business Division. UCO's Empowering Natives team won first place in the BankFirst Small Business Interview Division, focusing on the development of a series of large greenhouses on Native American lands that will help eliminate food deserts on reservations and bring health, hope and independence to Native Americans. Central's Pick Pro team, from the College of Business, won second place in the High Growth Graduate Division, in addition to winning the interview in the manufacturing, material sciences and transportation category. Pick Pro markets a patented light duty electric cargo vehicle that reduces time and expense for shipping fulfillment centers by enhancing productivity in picking, packing and shipping functions. Additionally, Regan McCarthick, a strategic communications and organizational communications major and entrepreneurship minor from Edmond, Oklahoma, won the Cox Communication Pitch competition.

UCO Students Win National ADDY Awards

Central's School of Design won two National American Advertising Federation Student ADDY awards, which honored the best advertising and graphic design of 2021. UCO is the only college or university in Oklahoma to win at the national level. Nhi Pham, a spring 2021 design graduate from Vietnam, won a gold ADDY in the packaging category for her "Folia" perfume packaging. Kirstie Arnold, also a spring 2021 design graduate from Yukon, Oklahoma, won a silver ADDY in the packaging category for "Love & Death" perfume packaging. Prior to the national awards, the School of Design brought home 41 gold, 21 silver and 28 bronze awards at the 2021 Oklahoma City ADDY Awards.



STUDENT ACCOLADES

UCO Student Selected for Social Justice Program

UCO student Christian Coleman, a senior international business major from Oklahoma City, was recently selected for the Memorial Foundation Social Justice Fellows Program inaugural class. The Memorial Foundation, the builders of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, launched several programs, including the Social Justice Fellows Program, to mark the memorial's 10th anniversary, aimed at bringing the memorial's lessons to young individuals across the nation. Coleman was one of 50 young leaders from across the country selected for the program.



Design Students at UCO Excel at Competition

UCO School of Design students recently excelled at the Graphex creative awards competition. Sponsored by the Art Director's Club of Tulsa, Graphex is an annual creative awards competition that honors the work of students and professionals. At this year's competition, Graphex 52, out of the 150 entries, five UCO School of Design students won top prizes, including first, second and third place, bringing home a total of 10 awards. Nhi Pham, a spring 2021 design graduate from Vietnam, won first place in the student portfolio category, the interactive category with Hamkke educational software for kids, the packaging category with Pup's Puffs dog biscuits and received honorable mentions for both the multimedia and packaging campaigns.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Central Facilitates Rowing Mentorship

UCO created the Junior Rowing program, a new mentorship program pairing middle and high school students in the local community with university mentors, as well as Central's three-time defending national champion rowing team. The program is designed to introduce students from underserved populations to the sport of rowing and give them the opportunity to learn more about higher education. In addition to the Central rowing program, several other areas across campus are assisting with the program, including Leadership Central, TRiO Upward Bound Math and Science, TRiO Talent Search and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). The first group of students participating in the program includes 19 students, all female, from metro area schools, ranging from the eighth to 10th grade.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

UCO Begins Homeland Security-Funded Program

Central is launching a new program, called "Preducation," for elementary students in Oklahoma schools. The program aims to introduce age-appropriate materials relating to prejudice, race, culture, disabilities and gender identity to young children to create awareness and understanding before stereotypes and bias are formed. The program is funded through a \$657,281 grant from the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Administration as a part of their non-emergency, anti-terrorism efforts. "Preducation" is a series of learning modules that approach multiple diversity issues that often result in prejudicial actions, bullying and school-site violence. A series of "friendly monsters" help guide children through the experiences, and lessons focus on the message that although we are all different, we are still the same. The content and activities are designed to help children accept and deal proactively with people whose backgrounds and experiences differ from their own.



A LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE

Connected Campus Expands Online Degrees

UCO has added three new fully online programs through its Connected Campus. Central now offers a Master of Science in nursing and two Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs – urban management and public and nonprofit management. Other online degrees offered through the UCO Connected Campus include the Bachelor of Business Administration in human resource management or marketing, the professional Master of Business Administration and the Master of Education in library media education, as well as the RN to B.S. in nursing track.



College of Business Expands Sales Program

The UCO College of Business and Bob Mills Furniture are partnering to establish the Bob Mills Professional Sales Center. Through the partnership, Central students in the professional sales program will have a dedicated space to practice selling strategies, prepare for competitions and interview with local executives and companies. The UCO professional sales program has been named one of the top universities for professional sales education by the Sales Education Foundation (SEF). Graduates of the program have a 100% job placement rate and go on to pursue successful careers in sales.

Central Launches Digital Credentialing with Credly

UCO launched a new digital badging program for students and credential earners. Individuals who complete designated courses or curriculum will earn a UCO digital credential. Central is working with Credly, the digital credentialing leader, to provide these digital badges. Digital badges have gained popularity as a new way for job applicants to display technical skills or learning experiences. The badges are verified and backed by data that confirms the credential. UCO currently offers more than a dozen opportunities for individuals to earn digital badges through the university's micro-credential offerings—which are learning experiences focused on a specific skill, knowledge or ability—and already has plans to add dozens more micro-credentials to the current lineup.



Central Launches International Collaboration Program

Central, in collaboration with Guizhou Normal University (GZNU) located in Guiyang, China, recently launched the Joint Academic Collaboration Program (JACP). Through the program, GZNU students will have the opportunity to pursue a bachelor's degree in music, conferred by GZNU, with approximately 30% of the curriculum taught by Central's School of Music faculty. The JACP officially launched at GZNU in fall 2021. The first cohort includes 116 students, with the hopes of meeting a quota of 120 students. The program is currently approved through 2029 and can be renewed with the permission of both institutions and the Chinese Ministry of Education.

UCO to Offer M.A. in Strategic Communications

UCO has expanded access to its quality, accredited degree programs with the addition of a new fully online program through UCO's Connected Campus. The university now offers a Master of Arts in strategic communications – leadership in communications. Curriculum will focus on learning to read, conduct, understand and communicate research to support organizational goals. Students graduate equipped to address issues surrounding change, organizational culture, ethics and technology in the fast-paced and dynamic communications industry.





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