

# County students among SWOSU leadership class

Seventeen high school seniors, including two from Canadian County, have been selected to the President's Leadership Class (PLC) for 2018-19 at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford.

Members of the class and their high schools are:

Audrey Christian, Weatherford

Shania Do, Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics in Oklahoma City

Victor Do, Community Christian in Norman

Morgan Duckwall, Newcastle

Alisa Friesen, Arnett  
Brody Hedges, Seiling  
Natalee Karcher, Greenwood in Midland (TX)

Jacob Kimmel, Yukon  
Natalie Kinder, Arapaho-Butler

Matalea Maddox, Elk City

Kylee Massey, Adair  
Ashtyn McAdoo, Piedmont

Cassidy Moses, Weatherford

Jillian Schneberger, Canute

Shylar Thornton, Elk City

Alexa White, Woodward

Amy White, Tipton

Each of the class members receive a \$500 per semester scholarship for two years, room scholarship for one year and enrollment in a leadership class that is offered exclusively to PLC students. After completing their second year of the program, students receive a sponsored trip to Washington, D.C. with SWOSU President Randy Beutler.

During the third and fourth years of the program, students serve as mentors for the first and second year PLC members.



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# OSSM grads are heading to colleges from coast to coast

## Academic signing day

**BY K.S. MCNUTT**  
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The 68 seniors at the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics gathered to announce their college choices at the school's first academic signing day.

"We scream and shout when someone gets into Stanford or Cornell," said Cynthia Parish, OSSM college counselor, who organized the pep rally.

She wanted the students to celebrate that much about every senior's college choice and give them a chance to cheer on their peers.

Her message is: "You will make a big impact wherever you go. Be excited. Get involved. Be engaged in the campus,

the community and the state."

OSSM is Oklahoma's public residential high school for juniors and seniors with exceptional ability in science and mathematics. The class of 2018 comes from 27 cities and town across the state.

"Some of these kids don't imagine the possibilities for themselves," Parish said Thursday.

SEE OSSM, 18A



**Right: Seven seniors at the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics pose for a photo after announcing they will attend Oklahoma State University during a signing day celebration Thursday.** (PHOTO BY BRYAN TERRY, THE OKLAHOMAN)



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Mei Zhang, of Edmond, announces she will attend the University of Southern California during a signing day celebration Thursday for seniors at the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics. [PHOTO BY BRYAN TERRY, THE OKLAHOMAN]

# OSSM

CONTINUED FROM 17A

“Once they get here, it all just opens up to them and they just thrive.”

Parish said 100 percent of the graduates are going to a four-year school, and most will continue their education beyond a bachelor’s degree.

A little more than half will go to a university in Oklahoma, while the rest are headed for 15 other states, plus Ireland and China.

“They’re spreading out. These kids are adventurous. I admire them,” Parish said.

Lawton Blanchard, of Yukon, is going to major in botany at Washington University in St. Louis. He plans a career in biochemical research, which means many more years

of school to obtain his doctoral degree.

Eventually, he hopes to return.

“I love Oklahoma,” Blanchard said. “I’d love to come back.”

When it came time to reveal his school of choice, Josmar Medina, of Oklahoma City, teased his classmates by removing one college T-shirt after another until he stopped with Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia.

The loudest applause, however, erupted for professor Michelle McCargish, who wrote letters of recommendation for 52 students.

OSSM class of 2016 graduate Yaseen Shurbaji, now the student body president at the University of Oklahoma, urged the new graduates to be positive.

“If you’re having

## CLASS OF 2018 HOMETOWNS

Oklahoma City, Edmond, Norman, Yukon, Midwest City, Newcastle, Stillwater, Woodward, Bartlesville, Pryor, Meeker, Tulsa, Sand Springs, Chattanooga, Sallisaw, Covington, Elk City, Duncan, Bixby, Lone Grove, Broken Arrow, Calera, Bennington, Marlow, Ardmore, Jenks and Guymon

## GRADS GOING IN-STATE:

- 19 University of Oklahoma
- 8 University of Tulsa
- 7 Oklahoma State University
- 1 Oklahoma City University
- 1 Southwestern Oklahoma State University
- 1 Cameron University
- 1 Northeastern State University

## GRADS GOING OUT-OF-STATE:

Two each to University of Chicago, Boston University, University of Southern California, Trinity University (Texas) and Case Western Reserve University (Ohio) One each to University of California-Los Angeles, University of Michigan, Washington University (Missouri), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Vanderbilt University (Tennessee), Purdue University (Indiana), Columbia University (New York), University of Alabama, Washington and Lee University (Virginia), University of Texas-Austin, University of Texas-Dallas, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University (California), Duke University (North Carolina), University of Rochester (New York), Southern Methodist University (Texas), Colorado College, Trinity College Dublin (Ireland), New York University Shanghai, (China) and Duke Kunshan University (China)

trouble finding the right path, create your own path,” said Shurbaji, who admitted he didn’t know what he wanted to do when he arrived at OU.

Parish first heard about the idea of an academic signing day when former first lady Michelle Obama

launched the Better Make Room campaign that highlights the possibility of a better education, a better career and a better future for young people.

“It’s catching on. More and more schools are doing it across the U.S.,” she said.

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