

# DANCING FOR THE STARS



**Black History  
Month on page 10**



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

Kindness can be both small and large, and can make the world around you a better place, 2023.

## Kindness is free

### THE WICHITAN STAFF

Kindness isn't always easy, but it's always appreciated - well, not really. Nor is it always a great sweeping act of magnanimity; much of the most effective kindness in the world comes from everyday people choosing to care about each other. It's almost always easier to think of yourself and make others' needs secondary, and sometimes

even our kindest actions receive no thanks. But if you're intentional in your interactions, you can both excel in your goals and make room to help others along the way - regardless of how thankless doing so can sometimes be.

There are two keys to creating kindness for others in your own life. One is making a determination to be aware of others around you. If you

make it a habit, it becomes easy to practice subconscious kindness - holding doors for others, picking up dropped items, small things that just make life a little better for others. The other way requires a more deliberate dedication to caring for others, and it's a bit harder but also more impactful. Fortunately, like most forms of kindness, it's still easy to do and has an impact that outweighs

the effort required to do it. Choosing to include kindness in every interaction is the first step to greater kindness. From there, it takes a dedicated effort; thinking about how others are feeling, and then thinking about how you can respect their mood. Taking a moment to understand others and tailor your tone and words accordingly can have a great deal of effect, and ultimately costs nothing.

## La amabilidad es gratis

### THE WICHITAN STAFF

La amabilidad no siempre es fácil, pero siempre se agradece - bueno, no realmente. Tampoco es siempre un gran acto de magnanimidad; la mayor parte de la amabilidad más efectiva en el mundo proviene de la gente del día a día, quienes eligen cuidarse los unos a los otros. Casi siempre es más fácil pensar en ti mismo y hacer que las necesidades de los demás sean secundarias, y a veces nuestras ac-

ciones más amables no reciben las gracias. Pero si eres intencional en tus interacciones, puedes sobresalir en tus metas y hacer espacio para ayudar a otros en el camino, a pesar de lo ingrato que pueda ser a veces.

Hay dos claves para crear amabilidad para los demás en tu propia vida. Uno es tomar la decisión de estar consciente de los demás a tu alrededor. Si lo haces un hábito, se vuelve fácil practicar la amabilidad

subconsciente: sostener las puertas abiertas para los demás, recoger objetos que se han caído, cosas pequeñas que simplemente hacen que la vida sea un poco mejor para los demás. El otro requiere una dedicación más deliberada para cuidar a los demás, y es un poco más difícil pero también más impactante. Afortunadamente, como la mayoría de las formas de amabilidad, sigue siendo fácil de hacer y tiene un impacto que

supera el esfuerzo requerido para hacerlo. Elegir incluir la amabilidad en cada interacción es el primer paso para una gran bondad. De ahí, se necesita un esfuerzo dedicado; pensar en cómo se sienten los demás y luego pensar en cómo puedes respetar su estado de ánimo. Tomar un momento para entender a los demás y adaptar tu tono y palabras de acuerdo con ello puede tener un gran efecto y además no cuesta nada.

## BRIEFS

### Saturday, Feb. 25 United Sports/Special Olympics

The Wellness Center in collaboration with MSU Texas Recreational Sports and the Wichita Falls Special Olympics will be hosting a unified basketball and softball game for local kids with special needs. The event will run from 10 a.m.- noon and will be held at the Bruce and Graciela Redwine Wellness Center and is free to participate and/or attend.

### Tuesday, Feb. 28 MSU Texas Choirs presents annual Red River Valley Choral Festival

In collaboration with high school choirs from Wichita Falls, the Choir dept. will be presenting their 2nd Annual Red River Valley Choral Festival. The Festival will feature two concerts at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The event is free for all students and non-students and will be held at Akin Auditorium.

### Thursday, Mar. 2 Mental Health Workshop- Depression and Anxiety

The MSU Texas Counseling Center hosts an informational workshop to discuss ways to combat depression and anxiety. The event will run from 3:00-3:45 p.m. and will be held in the Legacy Multi-purpose Room.

the **WICHITAN**

Vol. 87 | No. 10

Midwestern State University  
Fain Fine Arts Bldg., Room D201  
3410 Taft Blvd. | Wichita Falls, Texas 76308  
(940) 397-4704  
wichitan@msutexas.edu | thewichitan.com  
@wichitanonline

**Editor-in-Chief:** Cecil Witherspoon  
**Managing Editor:** Anne Akpabio  
**Design Editor:** Abigail Jones  
**Photography Editor:** Colin Stevenson  
**Spanish Editor:** Lizbeth Jaimes  
**Business Manager:** Tiffany Haggard  
**Social Media Manager:** Rebekah Gardner  
**Section Editor:** Joey Arthur  
**Issue Staff:** Esmeralda Carlos, Emily Copeland  
**Advisor:** Jonathon Quam  
Copyright ©2022.

First copy free. Additional copies \$1.00 each.

The Wichitan is a member of the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association and the Associated Collegiate Press. The Wichitan reserves the right to edit any material submitted for publication.

Opinions expressed in The Wichitan do not necessarily reflect those of the students, staff, faculty, administration or Board of Regents of Midwestern State University.

The Wichitan welcomes letters of opinion from students, faculty and staff submitted by the Friday before intended publication. Letters should be brief (250 words or fewer) and without abusive language or personal attacks. Letters must be typed and signed by the writer and include an email address, telephone number and address.

# MSU WORKS TO EDUCATE WITH TAKE BACK THE NIGHT



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

The Health Peer Educators organization introduces students to the Take Back the Night event, Feb. 10.



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

Title IX director Laura Hetrick and Residence Life and Housing senior associate director Callie Langford stand together at MSU's 2023 Take Back the Night event, Feb. 10. Hetrick led coordination for the event, helped by Langford.

CECIL WITHERSPOON  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A global tradition took on a local form at MSU Friday, Feb. 11. Organizers, student organizations and participating students turned out for Take Back the Night, an event dedicated to raising awareness about sexual violence.

Laura Hetrick, Title IX director and one of the coordinators of the event, said the event covers a wide variety of sexual assault- and harrasment-related issues.

"It's basically really focused on topics that relate to Title IX issues. So sexual assault, harrasment, stalking, domestic violence, dating violence, anything along that line. And our goal is to kind of work with students and help them know how to identify this and what resources are available on campus, if they're experiencing or they know someone who's experiencing any of these issues," Hetrick said.

Take Back the Night events date back over 60 years, including marches and rallies across both the United States and the world. Early iterations of the event started as protests against violence committed against women. As the name implies, Take Back the Night events began with the goal of making the night safer for women. Now, the event is more proactive and educates students on ways to protect themselves and identify issues in advance.

Biology junior Sydney MacDonald attended the event, and said she felt it was important to inform students on how to keep themselves safe, both physically and emotionally.

"I think it's valuable because it helps people, it opens their eyes to the situations that they're currently in that they might not recognize. Like you might be in a relationship and think it's healthy, but then you come here and it highlights that if you're not communicating well or if your significant other always has to have your location or is calling you always, that might not be healthy. And so then it can help you form a healthier relationship from what you're currently in or get out of a bad situation before it gets worse," MacDonald said.

Another attendee of the event, computer science graduate student Chad Callender, said the educational aspect of the event is especially important for college students and young adults.

"It definitely brings awareness to like, sexual assault and you know, like, domestic violence to like, young adults. Because that's very important for us just going into the world in a few years. So this kind of puts that all into perspective and shows you that, oh, it's more prevalent than you really think, so I think that's really good for that,"



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

A local taco truck serves street tacos to students at MSU's 2023 Take Back the Night event, Feb. 10. Some free vouchers were handed out at the event, but students were also able to purchase a variety of tex-mex foods.

Callender said.

Accounting sophomore Matthew Pruyne manned a table specializing in self-defense education at the event, one of several educational stations set up.

Pruyne said the event offered a great opportunity for students to socialize and have fun while learning about an important topic.

"This event is amazing. Like it is massive, it gets everybody involved. It teaches so many different things. It gets people involved, like, socially, it gets new friend groups happening, it gets people just trying to mingle together. In my case, it's self defense, they learn how to defend themselves. They have many, several other stations to where they can learn about new groups, learn about new organizations like your sororities, your fraternities. It's just overall a great social event," Pruyne said.

Nursing sophomore Kaylee Johnson echoed the same sentiment, and said the event had the appeal of a college gathering while still covering heavy topics.

"I think it's important for college students especially to have some type of awareness against sexual assault. And I think sometimes it can all be really heavy and kind of a downer, but like to have like a fun event I think that's important to spread the word, spread awareness. Especially for, you know, a younger audience," Johnson said.

# TIKTOK BAN FORCES MSU TEXAS TO ADAPT



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREG ABBOTT

Governor Greg Abbott acts against TikTok's use in state agencies and warns state agencies that DEI initiatives are illegal, 2023.



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN  
TikTok is currently banned on MSU networks, and all official MSU accounts on the platform are deactivated, 2023.

CECIL WITHERSPOON  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Texas state agencies and universities are moving swiftly to achieve compliance with a new mandate from Gov. Greg Abbott. The mandate will affect state employees at all levels by banning TikTok, one of the most popular social media platforms, from all state devices and networks. The ban arose from concerns that TikTok could be used by China, where the app originated, to remotely survey state agencies and gather sensitive data.

Since MSU is a state university, university officials have had to work to put together a plan to submit to the state. The state required plans to be submitted by Feb. 15.

Interim President Keith Lamb confirmed that the university will no longer use TikTok in any official capacity.

"As a state agency, we will fully comply with the governor's orders. And, you know, you won't be able to access TikTok on our Wi-Fi platform, right, or on state computers," Lamb said.

A statement from the university echoed that MSU has worked to be compliant with the new guidelines.

"We have taken appropriate measures in response to the governor's ban, including deactivating all official MSU Texas accounts. While we had seen success in communicating with our stakeholders through this medium, we understand the necessity with complying the governor's directive as it pertains to safety for state agencies," the MSU statement read.

MSU has collaborated with other members of the Texas Tech system, which has led the way in creating safety and compliance guidelines. Lamb said coordination had been key to ensuring all agencies are on the same page.

"We're working through it obviously," Lamb said, later adding "We've fully complied with the governor's orders to this point. The Tech system is really helping us work through it, so all the components are taking the same measures."

In a public statement, the Texas Tech system said all universities in the system have submitted their plans to comply with the guidelines for approval.

"The Texas Tech University System has received the statewide model security plan that was shared by the Governor's office on Monday, Feb. 6, and was developed by the

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR). The TTU System Administration and component university leadership teams have worked closely with information technology leaders across the system to develop a prohibited technologies policy that aligns with the guidance provided from DPS and DIR. Each TTU System component university submitted their respective institution's plan to the state for its approval by the deadline (Feb. 15) provided," The Texas Tech system statement said.

In a press release, the state of Texas said Gov. Abbott is willing to help pass bills that share his directive's goals. The Texas state legislature is in session until May 29.

"The Governor also informed Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick and Speaker Dade Phelan that the Executive Branch is ready to assist in codifying and implementing any necessary cybersecurity reforms passed during the current legislative session, including passing legislation to make permanent the Governor's directive to state agencies."

## ABBOTT'S SECURITY OBJECTIVES

### Objective 1

PROHIBIT the download and use of Prohibited technologies on any state-issued device

### Objective 2

PROHIBIT employees and contractors from conducting state business on PROHIBITED TECHNOLOGY-enabled personal devices

### Objective 3

Identify sensitive locations, meetings, and personnel within an agency that could be exposed to Prohibited technology-enabled personal devices

### Objective 4

Implement network-based restrictions to prevent the use of prohibited technologies on agency networks by any prohibited technology-enabled Personal device.

### Objective 5

Coordinate the incorporation of any additional technology that poses a threat to the State's sensitive information and critical infrastructure into this plan

# TEXAS ELIMINATES DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AS HIRING CRITERIA



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

**MOSAIC associate director Ruby Garrett talks about methods to build awareness and inclusion on campus,**

**EMILY COPELAND  
REPORTER**

**D**iversity, equity and inclusion policies have become commonplace on many college campuses. Earlier this month, all public universities and state agencies in Texas received a letter from Gov. Greg Abbott with a warning that DEI hiring violates federal and state employment laws.

The memo said, “when a state agency adjusts its employment practices based on factors other than merit, it is not following the law. Rebranding this employment discrimination as ‘DEI’ does not make the practice any less illegal.”

Many schools, including the University of Texas, Texas Tech University, and Texas A&M University have already made efforts to pause or change their policies. MSU officials believe the university has been handling hiring in the correct manner already.

Interim President Keith Lamb said he doesn’t believe the new order will

change how MSU operates.

“Essentially, what the governor was saying is we cannot use DEI as a litmus test in hiring. And Midwestern doesn’t and hasn’t done that anyway, used it as a litmus test. So I don’t see it materially impacting our hiring practices,” Lamb said.

MSU, which is close to becoming a Hispanic-serving institution, takes diversity practices seriously, with its recently adopted core values reading it “...is committed to community, cultivating a diverse and inclusive campus environment.”

There have been no DEI bills filed in Texas as of yet, and Lamb said he doesn’t expect any impact on the issue from the ongoing legislative session.

“This is early in the session, but at this time I don’t see any impact with DEI on MSU from where we’re at right now,” Lamb said, later adding, “You see different bills and so on and so forth being filed around the country. We just don’t know if that’s going to happen in Texas or not, if any bills related to DEI

will be filed.”

Lamb said if a bill is filed, MSU will continue to uphold the law, but will also continue to prioritize the needs of its students.

“Whatever the law is, we’re going to follow the law, right?” Lamb said. “But I can also tell you that we’re gonna take care of our students, we’re going to support our students, we’re going to do everything that we can to make our students successful, you know, regardless. And so we’re going to follow the law but we’re also going to take care and support our students.”

A statement from the MSU Public Information Office backed up Lamb’s sentiment. The statement read, “We will continue to lean into our core values, as we celebrate and advance the beauty of our diverse campus while maintaining an environment free from any discrimination.”

The Texas legislative session runs through May 29, with the deadline for unrestricted bill filings coming on March 10.



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

**Planning and assessment director Eboneigh Harris and MOSAIC director Cammie Dean attend the DEI Education Session and discuss ways to make students, faculty and staff feel more included, Feb. 23.**



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

**Buttons with various pronouns are offered by MOSAIC associate director Ruby Garrett, Feb. 23.**

# DANCING FOR THE STARS

## A BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS FUNDRAISER

ABIGAIL JONES  
REPORTER

Big Brothers Big Sisters held its annual fundraising event and competition Dancing for the Stars on Feb. 17. Attendees of the event were given purchasable ballots with which they could vote on their favorite dancing team, and Jean Hall, executive director of Wichita County's BBBS, said that the local community was very generous.

"We actually met budget before the event started so we were like this is fantastic. We're just shooting for the stars now. And then the amount that came in during the event was more than projected so....we were just happy at every level," Hall said. "That let us walk in with confidence that night because, like, we can't blow it at this point. We can have a bad experience, but we're not gonna be a failure at this point."

Dancing for the Stars' fundraising goal was \$125,000 and the event raised \$133,850 by the end of the night. Hall said these funds go to funding their programming and personnel, thereby ensuring the quality of BBBS' mentorships. Hall and her team have already begun planning for next year's event and, according to Hall, are hoping to reach further beyond their goals.

"I am exhausted. But also thrilled. Absolutely thrilled. The community turned out in force," Hall said. "And in the end

the numbers came down to a big success for the kids. Which was the whole point. Because the goal wasn't to have a party. The party was the means toward the goal of helping the kids and it was successful. That's really what we wanted to see."

Pam Hughes Pak, 2021 winner of the Mirrorball award for raising the most money of the night, was asked to be a judge for this year's event. She said her own experience competing helped her understand how much work each team of dancers put into their performance.

"I'm not gonna lie I warned them I was just gonna give everybody a 10. There was no way that anybody deserved less. When they volunteered to do Dancing for the Stars, because I was on the other side, I knew what that meant," Pak said. "Knowing that they had to do that, I mean, they were already winners... when they said yes they said 'I'm gonna sacrifice to help Big Brothers Big,' Sisters so they deserve 10's."

Pak said that it was an honor to be asked on as a judge and that she and her family had been involved with Dancing for the Stars since its beginning over eight years ago. Both Pak and Hall are MSU alums, an aspect that Hall said makes her proud to see MSU students participating in BBBS programming.

"I'll tell you what, the programming people here have said over and over, the programming at MSU, the mentoring ac-

tivities we do there, they're solid, they're dependable, and they got us through the pandemic. Because, you know, when everything's going virtual the MSU students were like "we got this!" The MSU students kept turning up to mentor through the pandemic. They never stopped," Hall said.

After having a smaller version of Dancing for the Stars in 2021, this event was a bit of a comeback for Hall and her team, as she described it as the first recent edition of the event with "the pre-pandemic flair [and] the big crowds."

Keith Lamb, interim president, said what BBBS does is critical to the Wichita Falls community and that MSU and BBBS' interaction made him proud.

"I'm really proud, frankly, to see that many people involved from Midwestern in such a great cause. And it goes beyond just having Midwestern's name out there, right, and having eyes on Midwestern and things like that. It's about the future of our community," Lamb said. "It helps give our youth, who may be disadvantaged or need that mentorship or need that guidance, that's the future of our community in many respects. And that's the community that we're a part of, and that's the community that we should be actively involved in, so, yeah I like seeing Midwestern be such a big part of things like that to be honest with you."



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN  
KFDX-3 reporter Lauren Linville gives "The Spice Boys" a score of 10 for their performance, Feb. 17.



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

Café con Leche founder Gonzalo Robles and assistant professor Stephanie Zamora-Robles dance together in the group "Latino Beat" to raise money for charity, Feb. 17.



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

"The Champions" dance to Aqua's "Barbie Girl" at the start of their performance, Feb. 17.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RUBYWORKS RECORDS.

Hozier gives thanks those that have fought systemic oppression in the music industry, 2018. Photo courtesy of Rubyworks Records.

# The Wichitan's Song of the Week: "NINA CRIED POWER"

JOEY ARTHUR  
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Welcome back to this week's edition of the Wichitan's Song of the Week. Still in celebration of Black History Month, this week's pick is "Nina Cried Power" by Irish-born singer-songwriter Hozier



PHOTO COURTESY OF RUBYWORKS RECORDS.

"Nina Cried Power" is the title track of an EP, 2018.

and American rhythm and blues and gospel singer Mavis Staples. Released Sept. 6, 2018, as the lead single of his 2019 studio album "Wasteland, Baby!," "Nina Cried Power" is a thank-you song to all the men and women in the music industry that have fought against systematic oppression. It is also a reminder to continue fighting oppression anywhere it may be. Following the activist themes of his first studio album, "Wasteland, Baby!" expanded on Hozier's goal to effectuate change through music and "Nina Cried Power" was a great way to begin.

Born in Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland, Andrew John Hozier-Byrne, is an award-winning and world-recognized singer-songwriter best known for his 2013 debut single "Take Me to Church." Since the release of "Take Me to Church," Hozier's career has been filled with nominations, awards and record-breaking achievements like being the first artist in Grammy history to be nominated for Song of the Year with a debut single in 2015. In conjunction with being a worldwide phenomenon, Hozier is best known for using music to fight for marginalized communities worldwide. In collaboration with Chicago-born civil rights activist and singer-songwriter Mavis Staples, Hozier released "Nina Cried Power" as a congratulatory anthem to the

many historic artists that have furthered the idea of activism through music.

"Nina Cried Power" is my favorite song from both the album and Hozier's discography as a whole. In "Nina Cried Power," Hozier and Mavis Staples both sing about the power of protest and activism. They talk about the important role that music plays and has played in activism through history. They also give thanks to prominent figures in the music industry that have fought against systematic oppression. Some examples of these prominent figures are Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, Mavis Staples, Marvin Gaye, Bob Dylan and more. Lastly, the song is a tribute to American R&B singer-songwriter, Nina Simone and her hit single, "Sinnerman."

As stated in previous editions of the Song of the Week, lyricism is an important aspect of any song and Hozier and Mavis Staples understood that when writing "Nina Cried Power." Hozier's songwriting abilities have been highly praised, recognized and awarded. In "Nina Cried Power," the singers use literary devices like repetition and metaphor to relay and reinforce the themes of the song. My favorite lyric in the entire song is:

*"It's not the song, it is the singin'  
It's the heaven of the human spirit*

*ringin'  
It is the bringin' of the line  
It is the bearin' of the rhyme  
It's not the wakin', it's the risin'"*

Activism was and is a vital aspect of any movement, especially the civil rights movement. Activism through music is a powerful way to influence people and Hozier solidifies that in "Nina Cried Power." The song is a great listen and a great tribute to a prominent person in Black history.

"...Nina Cried Power' is a thank-you song to all the men and women in the music industry that have fought against systematic oppression... [and] a reminder to continue fighting

oppression anywhere it may be."

JOEY ARTHUR

RATING: 4/5



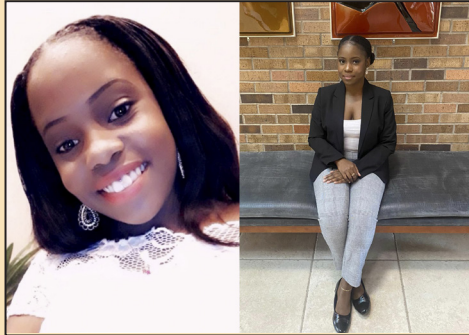
# LO QUE ME DIRÍA A MÍ MISMO EN MI PRIMER AÑO



Anne Akpabio

ESMERELDA SOLORIO  
TRADUCTOR

Desde el primer momento de novedad y entusiasmo como estudiante universitario, hay la posibilidad de graduación, la realidad parece lejana al principio de la experiencia universitaria. Se habla mucho de la emoción de la graduación, pero el viaje que conduce se ignora mucho. Y entonces, está la pregunta de qué información es relevante saber antes de caminar por la etapa, lo que en retrospectiva, un estudiante de último año podría compartir con un estudiante de primer año, la versión de ellos mismos en el momento más esperado de la graduación.



FOTOS CORTESÍA DE NORMA BENJAMIN

Norma Benjamín se aconseja a sí misma en su primer año de estudiar a priorizar el trabajo escolar pero apartar tiempo para divertirse.

Norma Benjamin  
Senior de Finanzas

“Me diría a mí misma en mi primer año que me involucre más. Participar con personas y en actividades sociales. Que aprenda todo lo que pueda de los demás. También priorizar cuando se trata del trabajo para la escuela, pero que deje espacio para



FOTOS CORTESÍA DE JOHN SHEPPARD.

John Sheppard se dice a sí mismo en su primer año de estudiar que extender la mano cuando necesita ayuda está bien.

John Sheppard  
Senior de Finanzas

“Me diría a mí mismo en mi primer año que sea súper organizado. Asegúrame de entender lo que dice el programa de estudios y lo que se espera de mí. Obtener un organizador o usar el calendario de mi teléfono para planificar el semestre. Ponerme en contacto con amigos, compañeros de clase y profesores cuando necesite ayuda. Aprender de mis errores y sobre todo tener confianza en mis propias



FOTO CORTESÍA DE YOHANN ISAAC

Yohann Isaac se dice a sí mismo en su primer año de estudiar que tenga la más disciplina posible. Foto cortesía de Yohann Isaac.

Yohann Isaac  
Senior en Contabilidad y sistemas de información gerencial

“Me diría a mí mismo en mi primer año que haga lo mejor para disfrutar día a día en la universidad y tener la experiencia universitaria porque cuando vas al mundo laboral va a ser completamente diferente, yo trataría de hacer todo, trataría de ir a más eventos, trataría de disfrutar las pequeñas cosas y me recordaría a mí mismo, siempre debes trabajar duro ahora para hacer tu vida más fácil en el futuro, trata de tener la mayor disciplina posible porque la motivación se puede ir pero la disciplina siempre se queda contigo”.



FOTOS CORTESÍA DE AMANDA THRELKELD

Amanda Threlkeld sugiere que mientras estudiar es importante, los estudiantes también deben enfocarse en las experiencias del colegio.

Amanda Threlkeld  
Senior de Contabilidad, sistemas de información gerencial y la gerencia de organizaciones sin fines de lucro

“No te preocupes por comenzar la universidad sola, construirás una comunidad y conexiones más rápido cuando te involucres. Enfócate más en las experiencias... en lugar de quedarte en la habitación para estudiar. Toma una cosa a la vez, todo funciona. Como estudiante de primera generación, conecta con el mismo grupo y la organización First2Go en el campus. Comienza tu especialidad y segunda concentración antes para que no agregues tiempo extra y toma los cursos adecuados. Estudia al extranjero tan a menudo que puedas y comienza el proceso temprano. No tengas miedo de hacer amigos porque serán fundamentales en tu experiencia universitaria y, con suerte, en tu vida”.



FOTOS CORTESÍA DE MARA HILL

Mara Hill se dice a sí misma en su primer año de estudiar que debe extenderse fuera de su zona de comodidad y hacer nuevos amigos.

Mara Hill  
Senior de Marketing

“Me diría a mí misma en el primer año que tengo que hacer nuevos amigos, no quedarme con personas que ya conocen mi cultura, construir una red, construir conexiones, involucrarme en más actividades en el campus, unirme a diferentes organizaciones, no quedarme en una zona de confort, pero mejor estar más abierta a probar nuevas cosas y conocer gente nueva y divertirme. Porque vinimos primero por la escuela, pero creo que hay un tiempo para eso, también deberíamos divertirnos y experimentar, especialmente como



# Unfinished Evolution of the Bridwell Activities Center

ANNE AKPABIO  
MANAGING EDITOR

Formerly known as the Daniel Building, the Bridwell Activities Center was designed to become the new hub for student recreation and interaction within MSU. Planning for the activity center began in February 2018. The BAC got its name in honor of a donation made by the J.S. Bridwell Foundation to MSU which was intended to reconstruct the former facility service building into a vibrant student space. The activities center was planned to become a center to provide space for organizations that aid student life on campus and allow for easy collaboration between student organizations.

Attached to the BAC is the Cannedy commons, which is named in recognition of the longtime advocacy of Greek Life at Midwestern State University by Mac and Connie Cannedy.

Two local foundations donated \$5 million to the reconstruction of the facility. The J.S. Bridwell Foundation is estimated to have donated \$4 million, and the remaining funding was provided by the Bryant Edwards Foundation. The donation was intended for construction remodels and renovations within the former Daniel Building, which consisted of a two-phase reconstruction and remodel plan.

Although the reconstruction process is ongoing, the building is now in use by the MSU student body and is serving as an outlet of the Clark student center.

"The Clark Student Center over the many years has continually kind of been like dissected and chopped up and

repurposed in many ways," Matthew Park, interim vice president of student affairs said. He later added, "Over time we've pulled more and more offices into the Clark Student Center and sort of meeting rooms have gone away, it's sort of like less and less. Little chips over time of what I would call like true student space has reduced, and so one of the goals with the Bridwell Activity Center is to make sure that we include or incorporate space for students."

According to Park, the activities center was built to foster and support the academic and social life of students on campus.

"But really what it is it's a place to support their academic and their social life on campus. So we knew that we wanted some space where they could go, where students could go and they could hang out or where they could study," Park said.

This goal inspired the design and style of the activities center

"And so if you go through the building you'll see a few different areas with different styles of seating intended to try to help accomplish that. Some areas are very much more like for, focused kind of academic study or individual work... and then you've got some kind of just soft lounge areas where there's like these rocking chairs and swivel chairs you can just hang out. Then you've got some more space for our student organizations and our departments in a sense of when they're just trying to conduct their business" Parks said

Although the construction work took two years and the university is trying to find funding to complete phase two of



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

**As part of its goal to be used as a place for student interaction, the BAC has a cafe where students can order drinks and snacks, then sit down to chat, Jan. 25.**



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

**Nursing seniors Jada Jackson and Nikky Okpamen and nursing junior Angel Lewechistudy while seated at the cafe in the BAC, Jan. 25.**



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN

**The Bridwell Activities Center was named in honor of a donation from the J.S. Bridwell Foundation, Jan. 25.**

the project, the student body has had access to the center since the closing weeks of the Fall semester.

Esmeralda Carlos, marketing senior and student assistant for University Programming Board said there has been a smooth transition from her office being situated in the Clark Student center to moving into the Bridwell Activities Center.

"I feel like we've had a pretty smooth transition so far after the students found out where our offices are. It's been nice because they used to go to our old location but now that they know it's like we never moved even though we did," Carlos said.

Business management junior Hunter Moore, another UPB student assistant, shared the pros and cons of moving into the Bridwell activities center.

"One definite pro is that the University Programming Board now has a separate office before it was a little closet within student affairs so students had to come to student affairs to come to the UPB office," Moore said, later adding, "The space is allowing for greater interaction between UPB and the campus. One con I would say though is we are a newer building and the grand opening was more for what it seemed to be alumni and donors and less for the students, and so a lot of students weren't there during the grand opening."

With second-floor renovations still planned, students can expect to see more improvements to the center.

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: IN PHOTOS



PHOTO BY JOSEPH ARTHUR | THE WICHITAN  
Global studies senior Lumiere Bisi holds his distinguished student award, which he received during the gala, Feb. 17.



PHOTO BY JOSEPH ARTHUR | THE WICHITAN  
Students enjoy and dance to music at the gala, Feb. 17.



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN  
Biology freshman Nathaniel Grimes glides backwards on roller blades as others watch, Feb. 16. Some students, like Grimes, were able to show off their skills on the rink throughout the night.



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN  
Students take circles around the rink, Feb. 16. Friends helped each other as some had little to no experience in roller skating.



PHOTO BY COLIN STEVENSON | THE WICHITAN  
Psychology junior Kylie Murray and psychology freshman Jaliyah Goff enjoy the music as the skate around the rink, Feb. 16.



PHOTO BY JOSEPH ARTHUR | THE WICHITAN  
Alumni of the Sigma Theta chapter of Delta Sigma Theta pose together for a group photo before the gala, Feb. 17.



PHOTO BY JOSEPH ARTHUR | THE WICHITAN  
MOSAIC coordinator Jamilah Kangudja greets everyone, starting off the 2023 Black Excellence Gala, Feb. 17.