HOLA, CONTINUED



Photo by: Hannah Risker| Photo Editor

Faith Ochoa looks at a Day of the Dead altar Monday night.

"On the altar you put their favorite foods, treats, candy, decoration and the belief is that they are to pass this imaginary bridge to come back and visit us the living," Ochoa said. "It's to remember all of our loved ones and anyone who has passed. They come and visit and we have to remember them, we have to remember what they've done for us. Their influences are what has made us who we are today."

Ochoa said in a broad sense, looking past just Day of the Dead, there are a lot of stereotypes surrounding different cultures and HOLA looks to show that every culture has a meaning.

"Every event that HOLA does is to educate other people and so that ignorance can be stopped," Ochoa said. "I think that (other students) love it and love the idea of learning new things and learning about different cultures."

HOLA is just one of many minority organizations across campus and Ochoa commented on the diversity at A-State.

"I think every year we become more diverse," Ochoa said. "We attract more and more people of different cultures. I think that every culture needs to be represented. My whole family is from Mexico. My parents came here to the United States to give me a better life. I just love my culture and I think that HOLA is a way for me to show others how proud I am."

COMM CENTER, CONTINUED

Zoom was actually a program the Communication Center wanted to implement before the pandemic.

"We're doing that this semester, and it's going really, really well. And so, you know, that is something that we're wanting to continue to do, even after the pandemic is over," Robins said.

Regarding A-State's response to the pandemic, Robins expressed satisfaction with the overall actions taken for the Comm Center.

"When we returned to campus in the fall, all the seats that could not be used were already marked off," Robins said. "The seats were already separated for the safety of the students and for the coaches that are working in the center. We had sanitizing wipes, we had sanitizer, you know. We had all the supplies that we needed."

Robins also noted his interactions with the administration over the summer, as he said, "I have actually contacted a few people over the summer, and, you know, had quick responses."

This reiterated his point about how safety for the students is a high priority in the Communication Center.

Robins explained why it is still important for students to use the Communication Center during the pandemic.

"Speeches and presentations are always going to be the way of communication, whether it'll be in the class or your place of business or whatever it may be," Robins said. "And so learning to properly communicate and being able to do that is always going to be vital."

If there is some advice for students during this pandemic, Robins provides a tried and true message: Taking care of yourself.

"My advice for students would be, obviously what we've all been asking this whole entire time is, you know, follow the proper guidelines," Robins said. "Follow physical distancing. Make sure that you are wearing the proper mask and follow the proper distancing guidelines. Make sure everything is staying wiped down. Just take care of yourself and take care of others, you know. We are all in this together, and so take care of yourself and take care of each other."

The Communication Center is located on the first floor of the Dean B. Ellis Library, inside the Learning Commons.

Hours are Mondays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., as well as Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Society of Professional Journalists to recharter on campus

HANNAH TAYLOR

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

The Arkansas State University chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists is set to recharter and have their first meeting on Thursday at 4 p.m. in the Delta Digital Newsroom in the Communications Building.

The informational meeting will discuss what SPJ's mission is, and how they plan on bringing attention to the importance of journalism on Arkansas State University's campus.

The Society of Professional Journalists was originally founded at DePauw University in 1909, and is the oldest organization representing journalists in the United States. The goal of SPJ is to educate current and future journalists and exercise the rights of freedom of press and speech as granted in the First Amendment.

"I hope that A-State SPJ can give students a fun way to get more involved in journalism," Courtney Edwards said, A-State SPJ's treasurer and secretary. "I want to give more students the chance to learn about SPJ and apply that knowledge to their future careers."

The officers plan on providing fun activities such as movie viewings, games and possibly trips to learn more about journalism for members as the chapter expands.

Terrance Armstard of the multimedia journalism department is the faculty advisor and chapter officers include Yoshika Shibata as president, Hannah Taylor as vice president, and Courtney Edwards as treasurer and secretary.

The first meeting is open to anyone interested, but afterward dues will be $5 for the semester in order to be a member.

You can follow the Arkansas State chapter of SPJ on Instagram @astateSPJ, on Facebook @A-StateSPJ, and on Twitter @AStateSPJ.



First year students write their own personal narrative

A-STATE NEWS

NEWS RELEASE

When first-year students at Arkansas State University were asked if they could learn to share a compelling personal story, some may have said, "You better believe it," because they did.

The First-Year Experience program at A-State manages the Making Connections course, which is a first-year seminar that helps students get connected to campus, and their major, and to succeed overall in their first year.

A-State students use what FYE calls a common reader, a book that the entire first-year class reads, in part or in its entirety, within their Making Connections class.

This year's reader is, "This I Believe II," a compilation of short personal essays written by remarkable people from throughout the world.

"Reading this book can help prompt discussion surrounding any number of issues," said Kelli Listenbee, director of Learning Support Services and coordinator of FYE. "Overall, the book helps students to understand their own personal narrative and how powerful that can be."

FYE annually hosts a special event around the theme of the common reader, but because of the ongoing pandemic they faced the challenge of figuring out how to carry on in a new way.

"A-State has a comprehensive FYE program and the common reader is one of several programs designed to enrich the first year at A-State," said Dr. Jill Simons, dean of University College and associate vice chancellor for academic services. "We are delighted that we were able to continue the event in a virtual format."

All of the Making Connections classes were eligible to opt-in for the common reader event, which followed a new path this year. Students were asked to write their own personal narrative starting with broad questions, such as, "How did you end up at A-State?"

They then shared them with fellow class members.

Based on those presentations, each participating class voted to select a single student to represent their class in video format. At that stage, the university's Digital Creative Media team, in the Division of Marketing and Communications, stepped in to assist. They recorded the selected students as they shared their stories.

Any student who was not recorded, but still wanted their story shared, was encouraged to submit their written essay to be included as part of a compilation in PDF format, "Red Wolf Reads," which was posted to the university's website. Some students even chose to share their stories anonymously.

Once the event went live, students, faculty and staff started voting on the narratives they felt had the most impact. They could vote for their favorite, or use any criteria they wanted in the voting process.

Voting continues until midnight Nov. 12.

Two winners, one from video entries and one who submitted a written narrative, will be selected, with winners to be announced Nov. 13. Each winner will receive a Lynita Cooksey First-Year Experience Scholarship valued at $250, to be used for spring semester books.

"This is my first semester coordinating FYE, but the common reader event was a great way for our faculty and students from across campus to come together (virtually) to celebrate our first year students," Listenbee said.