



NSU-OIL grabs state officer positions

By Dustin Woods

NSU Staff Writer

For many students the "Northeastern State University Delegation to the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature" is more than a verbose moniker.

For its members, it represents an opportunity to learn first-hand about the operation of government.

Each semester a Riverhawk delegation attends a session at one of the nation's oldest mock state legislatures, OIL. Most recently, a delegation comprised of newcomers and veterans attended the first session of the 42nd legislature April 14-18 at the Capitol in Oklahoma City.

"NSU's delegation performed admirably as always this session, and although we didn't place in awards it was nice to see many other schools stepping up to the bar we have set in recent years," said Stephen Rogers, a junior from Inola.

Rogers, a former member of the NSU delegation, was elected Speaker Pro-Tempore of the House of Representatives in 2009. After a one-year term he was elected Speaker of the House during the spring session.

"As Speaker, I am the presiding officer over the OIL House of Representatives, and I am honored to represent NSU in that capacity at the statewide level," Rogers said.

Founded in 1969 by Lt. Gov. George Nigh, OIL is a mirror of the state government with an executive, a senate, a house of representatives, a supreme court and a recently added journalism competition. Each semester student delegations from colleges and universities across the state meet for five days in the chambers of the Oklahoma Capitol building to hear, amend and debate student-authored legislation. At the conclusion of each session, bills passed by the chambers and signed by the OIL governor are presented to Oklahoma's elected legislature for examination.

"NSU took a very young delegation to session this spring, said NSU delegation chair Amber Buker, a junior from Skiatook. "Senior members kept the House rollicking with the creation of Beard-O-Grams, a date auction to raise money for breakfast and entertaining legislation while NSU's freshman members got a feel for the energetic action on the floor."

Buker was also the victor in a state-wide election during the session and is the highest ranking woman in the organization leadership.

"This session, I ran for attorney general of OIL," she said. "In the end I ran unopposed and was accepted as AG by acclamation.... It was a great feeling to get my very first OIL slow clap and as the room swelled with noise, I felt as though it was my starting gun, spurning me to begin doing work."

Students, while exposed to the inner workings of government at OIL, are also immersed in a simulation that often produces public servants.

"My favorite thing about OIL is feeling empowered," Buker said. "OIL allows students a voice in a world all their own. OIL is much more than a make-believe mock legislature; it is the leaders of tomorrow running a simulation test for the way we will make the world when it is our turn...."

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