

SUPER HEROES OF CASNR

Spiderman™ climbs skyscrapers and uses his web-influenced hands to string a web downwards so he can save a woman from severe danger. Superman™, with his super speed, x-ray vision, and flying abilities, is capable of reaching hurt and distressed victims in record time. Wonder Woman™ uses her accessories, tiara, indestructible bracelets, and lasso of truth, to take down the bad guy.

Just the same as the comic book superheroes work, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources have our own superheroes. The ladies in the Dr. Bill Bennett Student Success Center are superheroes with a passion for Texas Tech University, CASNR and agriculture.

Elizabeth Bertrand, the first face some students see of the college, is the coordinator for student recruitment. Bertrand started working at the CASNR Student Success Center as an undergraduate student in the spring of 2009, then became recruiter for the college in 2014. As the student recruiter, Bertrand's smiling face welcomes potential students and new students to the big, new world of Texas Tech.

"As staff, we have such a huge roll in a student's future and their decision to come to this university," Bertrand said. "Even if that's just a handwritten letter or a phone call that we may not even remember making, that has such a huge impact on a student, and it carries over to when they are (enrolled as) a current student."

Bertrand said being able to interact with the potential students and following up with them after their campus visit helps the college with their recruitment efforts and connections with the students.

"The efforts done by the Student Success Center is what ties everything together and makes this university feel like home for them," Bertrand said.

Lyda Garcia, an Academic Assistant Professor for the college with her doctorate in meat science from Texas A&M University, also serves as the coordinator for student diversity. She said, after attending four different universities for her own studies, she is happy to have ended up at Texas Tech, a place she considers home.

"My role in the Student Success Center is very dynamic," Garcia said. "I basically bring the diversity component to what everybody does."

Garcia's responsibilities are not specific to one area, but rather throughout the entire office at the Student Success Center. Many of her duties involve assisting the other ladies with recruiting and retention efforts, outreach, and translation.

Serving as the coordinator of scholarships for the

center is Cindy McCullough, the sweet, quiet woman behind the scenes helping students make their futures attainable here at Tech. McCullough's duties within the scholarship department include making sure each student who receives a scholarship makes the deadline for writing their thank you notes, managing banquet attendance, and various other requirements each particular scholarship may need.

"My favorite part about working in the Student Success



The ladies of the Dr. Bill Bennett Student Success Center

Center is definitely interacting with all of the students," McCullough said. "They can be frustrating at times, as anybody can be, but my favorite part about my job is listening to the students and learning about them."

A big part of students being successful at Tech is knowing what obstacles students may face and helping them through it. In steps Holly Cogdell, coordinator for student retention. A New Mexico native, Cogdell earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural communications at Texas Tech and was hired on at the Student Success Center in June of 2014.

"My job sure keeps me busy," Cogdell said with a laugh. "But I enjoy being able to interact with students and, ultimately, helping them succeed."

Cogdell said she has all types of students that come into her office. She said she interacts with students with many different concerns.

"We might have to have a tough conversation over what we need to do to get back on track and salvage the semester," Cogdell said. "As a college we want to see our students be successful and we don't want them to fall through the cracks."

Savannah Leonard's role is to ensure students are ready to graduate.

Originally from Sonora, Texas, Leonard might

possibly be student's most helpful faculty member. Savannah said she grew up coming to Texas Tech with her family. Being a third generation Raider, she said some of her best childhood memories involved Tech football games and Tech traditions.

"I meet with each student at orientation and talk to them about their major and what they want to do," Leonard

*"It's an
amazing
family feeling."*

said. "Then, at gradation, I get to meet with them again and so it's exciting to see the students change and grow and what they go on to do."

Janie Lopez directs visitors to the student success to the appropriate person. Whether you are walking in to visit with one of the ladies face to face, calling in, or even sending mail, Lopez is probably one of the first ladies you will interact with. Lopez said she enjoyed all the fellow staff members in the Student Success Center and loved to welcome people into the agricultural college.

Lopez attended Tech, but not through the typical path. Lopez was a nontraditional student and attended college much later in life, after she had full grown children. She said she now gets to be a part of the university she so dearly loved.

"Meeting the students and being able to direct them towards the appropriate person, or helping someone get a start with connecting to this college are some of the best parts of my job," Lopez said.

Shelbey Havens, a senior agricultural communications major, said she has frequently visited the Student Success Center throughout her time at Texas Tech.

"I have visited everyone in the office, Havens said. "Each section has helped me grow as a student. Each lady is special in her own way and have made the college life easier." 📖



Cindy McCoullough talking to a scholarship donor.



Emily Henry, was excited for her graduation during the May 2014 ceremonies.

Keely Hamman
JACKSBORO, TEXAS

