

NSU event encourages careers in education

By JACOB REYNOLDS/TDP Special Writer | Posted: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 10:58 am

Positivity was the message during the 17th annual Celebration of Teaching on Tuesday, Jan 26.

The celebration is held once a year, usually during the spring semester. It is designed to show the positive side of teaching.

“The goal of this event is, hopefully, to inspire and motivate junior and senior high school students to go into teaching,” said Ingrid Massey, Assistant Professor in College Education and Kappa Delta Pi. “All of our students visiting will get to participate in hands-on activities that are designed to promote the fun side of teaching. We want to send the students back to school with more of an appreciation for what their teachers do.”

In Oklahoma, teaching sometimes endures negative characterizations through media, and supporters of this event are looking to change that.

“For right now, looking at where we are today, facing a teacher shortage, by looking at the positive side we can promote how rewarding being a teacher can be,” said Massey.

The starting salary a teacher makes in Oklahoma is roughly \$31,600 before taxes. That amount is not very persuasive and a lot of teachers are traveling elsewhere to teach.

“If we pay teachers better in Oklahoma then a lot of teachers would stay teaching here,” said Massey.

Tobi Thompson, Director of College Education, shares many of the same views as Massey regarding the state of teaching in Oklahoma.



Celebration of Teaching

The annual Celebration of Teaching at Northeastern State University urges middle and high school students to consider careers in education. Present at Tuesday’s event were, from left, Dr. Tobi Thompson, director of NSU’s “Cappi” Wadley Reading Center; keynote speaker Shawn Sheehan, and Dr. Ingrid Massey, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction.

“It is hard to be a teacher in Oklahoma when marble floors are more important than children,” said Thompson.

Celebration of Teaching is a team effort and a lot of volunteers helped organize the event. Activities lasted from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The keynote speaker was Oklahoma Teacher of the Year, Shawn Sheehan. He taught math and special education at Norman High School for five years. He set out to removed any doubts students have about making teaching a career.

“[I am] here to validate NSU teacher-student candidates that they’ve made the right choice to become a teacher,” said Sheehan. “Teaching is the most fun and rewarding job there is. These college students need to be reassured about going into the profession.”

Of the current conditions teachers face in Oklahoma, Sheehan said, “We have our challenges and there are improvements to be made, but our children need us.”

He reminded teachers to “stay positive,” and “remember why we do this.”

When asked about what he hopes for teachers in the future, Sheehan replied, “stable funding for public education and a resurgence of positive, passionate teachers.”

He looks forward to speaking with legislators when the session starts in February, while continuing to promote teaching as a career to students, and speaking with school districts.

He aims to “balance the negativity with my message of positivity.”