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## Ouachita senior wins runner-up Sigma Tau Delta International Convention

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**NEWS**

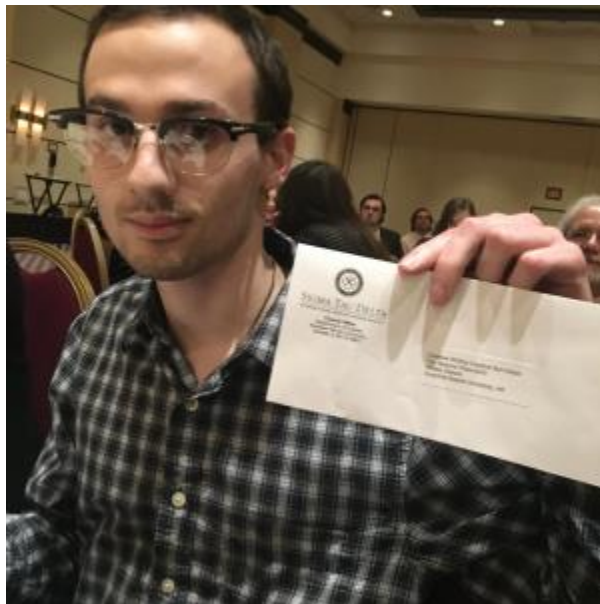
For immediate release

**Ouachita senior wins runner-up at Sigma Tau Delta International Convention**

*By Sarah Davis*

April 6, 2017

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at [newsbureau@obu.edu](mailto:newsbureau@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5208



ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University senior Shelby Spears won first runner-up for Best Creative Non-fiction Essay in the Sigma Tau Delta International Convention's Isabel Sparks President's Awards. The convention was held March 29-April 1 in Louisville, Ky.

Spears, a senior English and Spanish double major from El Dorado, Ark., is a member of the Sigma Tau Delta international English honors society. His creative essay titled "Do You Make Your Own Tortillas?" tells the story of his grandmother's passing.

"I was just really flabbergasted. I knew people had liked my essay when I presented it at my panel, but it still came as a surprise when they called my name," Spears said. "It's pretty validating to win an award like this because it lets me know that people don't secretly think everything I write is complete and utter garbage."

The annual convention gathers hundreds of scholars from around the world. It allows members the opportunity to engage with speakers, presenters and texts while also presenting their scholarly essays, creative non-fiction, fiction, poetry and other papers and discussing their ideas with peers.

"Shelby came to us as a very good writer, and he's gotten better because we have a strong faculty who push students to improve," said Dr. Doug Sonheim, chair of Ouachita's Department of Language and Literature. "He's an excellent student of language, and the award will help him in a job search or grad school applications. Employers want good writers."

Sigma Tau Delta international English honors society includes more than 880 active chapters in the U.S. and abroad, and about 9,000 members are inducted annually. The Isabel Sparks President's Awards are given for best presentations by active student and alumni members at the convention. Thirty-seven President's Awards were given this year in seven categories.

For more information contact Dr. Doug Sonheim at [sonheimd@obu.edu](mailto:sonheimd@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5554.

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PHOTO OF SPEARS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

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