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**ON THE CALENDAR**

Spring 2010 Priority Registration (current students only)	November 9-18
Spring Cosmetology Application Deadline	November 20
Registration Spring 2010	November 16 - January 8
New Spring Student Orientation/Registration	November 19 9:00am
Thanksgiving Holiday No Classes Campus Closed	Nov 24-27 Nov 25-27
FAFSA Application Deadline for Spring 2010	December 1
New Spring Practical Nursing Student Registration	December 3 9:00am OR 1:00pm
New Spring Student Orientation/Registration	December 3 1:00pm
Orientation/Registration for New Spring Cosmetology Students	December 4
Final Exams	Dec 7-10
RN Pinning Ceremony	December 8
PN Pinning Ceremony	December 10
New Spring Student Orientation/Registration	December 11 9:00am
Fall Cosmetology Class Ends	December 18
Christmas Holiday Campus Closed	December 23- January 3

**Achieving the Dream: Shows OTC is Above the Norm**

Thanks to the economic slump in the United States, there has been much news of how America needs to regain its world status as having the highest percentages of adults with college degrees. Educational experts such as J. Noah Brown, president of the Association of Community College Trustees, have pointed out as recently as September of 2009 that community colleges can play a role in helping educate the American workforce as a means of increasing our economic recovery.

Ouachita Technical College, as one of the four Achieving the Dream two-year colleges in the state, recently enjoyed some good news concerning its efforts to educate Arkansans and maintain the state's competitive edge in attracting quality workers into quality jobs. According to *Data Notes*, an Achieving the Dream publication that tracks both national and college-specific student success data, Ouachita Technical College students are earning more credits, completing more degrees, and transferring on to four-year colleges at higher rates than their cohorts nationwide.

According to their national data, 40% of OTC students (as contrasted with 31% nationally at other Achieving the Dream institutions) earned credits, completed degrees, or transferred within two years—all early indicators that students will continue to move successfully through their college educations. And education is something that employers value—and reward with high pay—in the workplace.

Typically, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor, a person without a high school degree or GED will earn on average 64% less than someone who has an associate's degree or has taken some college courses. Nationally, two-year colleges are the premier institutions that lead to such degrees.

Ouachita Technical College is in its third year of an Achieving the Dream grant, aimed at using data to improve student success, especially the success of low income and minority students. The college has launched three initiatives to help with that success—two course-level initiatives (one in Intermediate Algebra, and one in Basic Composition) and one college-wide initiative to improve overall their students' first year experience.

The College also has strong ties between its academic undertakings and in being responsive to employers in the community, relying on a network of professionals on Advisory Committees to guide the college divisions in the needs of the workplace.

Recently, the College has received feedback from a benchmarking project that compares its students to students across the U.S. t h a t documents the success with which OTC is educating its students. Nationally, course-level

success rates (students receiving grades A-C in college-level courses) average 77%, while OTC's average 83% overall. And in some basic skills courses, students at OTC are making the transition into college-level courses at a higher rate (79% from Intermediate Algebra to College Algebra) than the national average (63%).

The College's Adult Education Program also enjoys higher pass rates in its GED program (82% for the college versus 73% nationally)—all indicators that the College is above the national norm in preparing students for the workforce or for additional educational attainment.

Achieving the Dream is a multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed. The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that traditionally have faced significant barriers to success, including students of color and low-income students.

Too many students leave community colleges without earning a certificate or degree, or without transferring to continue their studies. Achieving the Dream is working to change that.



# From the President's Desk...



The first time you ever tried anything new, you were probably not very good at it. Think about trying bowling or golf the first time. It looks so easy. Ever try writing a poem or investing in the stock market? Did you ever watch five year old kids play their very first baseball game before? It's very laughable. Just about every new endeavor a human being tries the first time has unsatisfactory and inconsistent results. But, if we study that endeavor, practice it for improvement, and keep trying then we can get much better at it. So it is with college.

We know that most new students do not know how to *do* college very well. The first year casualty rates are the highest. Our freshman orientation and organized first year experience for new students is designed to help them learn as quickly as possible how to do college successfully. The following is just a short list of some of the things that good college students learn to do the first semester that helps them

become successful: Show up and attend class, sit on the first two rows, study the syllabus and learn what the instructor expects, do the homework and complete assignments on time, study for exams, get a study buddy or group for doing homework or test preparation, get tutoring (it's free at OTC), learn the instructor's office hours and visit him/her regularly, learn how to take tests, learn and practice time management, learn personal finance skills then make and follow a household budget, and participate in some student organization. I could write a 250-word paper on the solid research behind each one of these few skills and why it improves student success. Learning these skills is learning to *do* college.

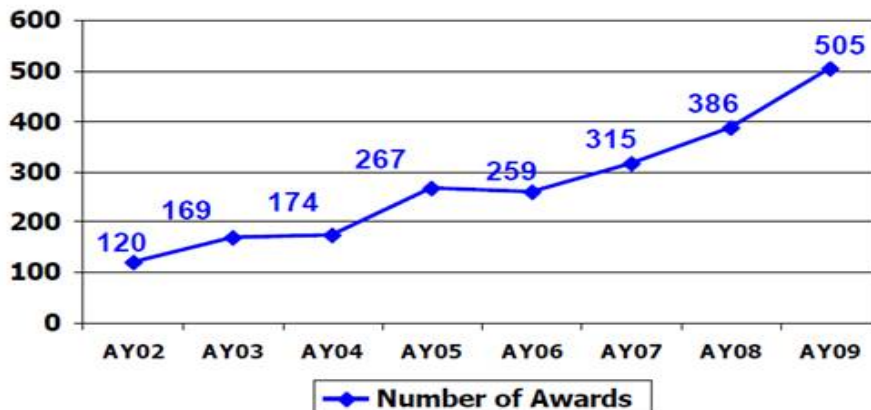
Likewise, when we, OTC faculty and staff, began earnestly studying the challenge and trying to improve student success, retention and graduation rates back in 2003, we were not very good at it initially. But we kept studying it, trying new strategies, practicing for improvement, collecting and studying data, studying the research on the related subjects, investing in training and technology, and making changes specifically to get better results, then we began improving. We are

deeply committed to keep studying this challenge and to keep trying new things to help more of our students get to the finish line.

The chart below shows just one measure of the improvement that our faculty, staff and students have made – more students are graduating. OTC is authorized to confer associate degrees, technical certificates and certificates of proficiency for college-credit course work and these credentials are collectively referred to as "awards." During the period between the Fall of 2000 and the Fall of 2009 OTC enrollment just about doubled – up 100%. During the period between the Fall of 2002 and the Fall of 2009 the number of awards conferred, graduation credentials earned, has increased 321%. The exciting thing is that we are committed to making our current levels of student success, retention and graduation rates much better and the many improvements that have been made in the last two years have not even shown up yet in our data. We, too, are learning to do college.

*J. Sam Ballard*

**Awards Conferred**



# New Faces on Campus... \*\*

## Vice President of Instruction, Dr. Martin Eggensperger

He's passionate about jazz, math, and the mission of two-year colleges. And he knows a LOT about brick. These interests make Martin Eggensperger the perfect fit for the Vice President of Instruction for Ouachita Technical College, the college located in "the brick capital of the world."



Eggensperger, who joined Ouachita Technical College in August, hasn't always been in the field of academe. Working on tasks as diverse as kiln supervision and architectural sales, Eggensperger learned about brick from his father, by following his father's footsteps in the brick business. Then he also followed his dad into the two-year college education business. Eggensperger hails from Maynard, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee.

He also plays blues guitar, he does a bit of magic, and he savors opportunities to work with students on their math homework. Indeed, his heart is in the work of two year colleges. "Community college students come from every walk of socio-economic, religious,

racial, and ethnic life. Because community colleges are open access institutions, they are among the most egalitarian of public education resources," says Eggensperger, and he loves the "melting pot" aspect of Ouachita Technical College—because it mirrors his own past experiences in life.

Eggensperger is especially pleased to be working at an Achieving the Dream institution. Ouachita Technical College is one of only four colleges in Arkansas to have Lumina Foundation and Winthrop Rockefeller grant funding specifically focused on using math (data and statistics) to improve the success of low-income students and students of color. He is interested in "improving retention and graduation rates of all students," and his facility with numbers is a benefit to him in difficult economic times.

"I believe the strongest college leaders openly discuss the college's mission, vision, and the best use of limited resources. Limited resources fuel the college to be more focused on its mission, to rally around the College's central

purpose." At Ouachita Technical College that means serving a variety of stakeholders—students in high school career education programs, in adult education, in health sciences studies, in technical programs. It also means meeting the needs of the students of all backgrounds who start at Ouachita Technical College en route to a four-year college degree.

"I am convinced," Eggensperger notes, "that education is of the utmost importance in empowering individuals and in changing lives. It awakens within us a realization of those characteristics that make us unique, as well as those that are shared by all." He believes that "through education, one hones the skills necessary to contribute productively to our community," whether as a brick kiln operator or as college mathematician.

Eggensperger comes to OTC after serving as both General Studies Division Co-Chair and as Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness at Southeast Arkansas College. He and his wife Jennifer have two children, Zoë and Ben. He and his family look forward to living in Malvern.

## Student Affairs/Finance and Administration Secretary, Shereka Garfield



Shereka Garfield is the new Secretary for Student Affairs

and Finance and Administration. Originally from Ashdown, Shereka comes to OTC from Arkansas State University where she worked in the Student Affairs Residence Life Office. Shereka has two Bachelor Degrees, both from ASU, one in Marketing Management and

the other in Accounting. When describing herself, she says she is "a genuine person who enjoys meeting and helping other people."

\*\* *New Faces* is the latest addition to the *At College Circle* newsletter and will be included when new faces are added on campus.

# OTC Awarded Rockefeller Grant

Ouachita Technical College has been awarded a \$70,000 two-year grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation/Annie E. Casey Foundation, announced Dr. Blake Robertson, Ouachita Technical College Vice President of Adult and Workforce Education. The purpose of this grant is to establish a new service delivery system bringing a network of agencies and programs together to help low-income families reach financial stability and move them up the economic ladder to self sufficiency. Ouachita Technical College has written the grant in support of five of its programs; Ouachita Area Adult Education Center, Even Start Family Literacy Program, Career Pathways Initiative, TRiO Support Services, and Achieving the Dream Initiative. These programs will be working with community partners such as: West

Central Arkansas Career Development Center System, Arkansas Workforce Service in Hot Spring County, Central Arkansas Development Council – Community Action Agency, Southern Good Faith Fund, and Arkansas Department of Health. Robertson said, “We want low-income families to know where they can go to receive assistance on how to tap into all of the services and support that these agencies offer.”

In creating this network of services, Ouachita Technical College and the community agencies will establish three service areas for these low-income families: 1) Employment / Education Services, which will establish job readiness and job placement services, hard skills training, and career advancement and advising services; 2) Income and Work Support, which will include access to public benefits with the

help of CPI trained counselors, tax assistance, and student financial aid and scholarships; and 3) Financial Services and Wealth Building, which will include financial literacy classes, one-on-one financial coaching, and an introduction to other financial services.

For 35 years, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation has worked to make a difference by helping to build and sustain the organizations that serve and strengthen Arkansas. Through grant making and strategic partnerships, WRF is working even harder to help close the economic and educational gaps that leave too many Arkansas families in persistent poverty. Working together, the needle can and must move from poverty to prosperity for all Arkansans. For more information on the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, go to [www.wrfoundation.org](http://www.wrfoundation.org).



# Sylvia Page Finds the Key to Success



Sylvia Page is a recent graduate of Ouachita Technical College. Her journey with OTC started in the spring semester of 2006 after an injury lead her back to school. Sylvia revealed, “It has been a hard, but very rewarding journey of which I am extremely proud.” She is a wife, mother of three, and a grandmother.

Sylvia worked for years in local hospitals as a Certified Nurses’ Assistant. Because she wanted to advance in the healthcare profession

she entered into OTC’s Medical Administration program. Sylvia said her last year at OTC was a very eventful year. As an active member of SkillsUSA, a student organization with a chapter on OTC campus which focuses on developing leadership and career and technical skills, Sylvia competed in state championship competitions in Hot Springs. Sylvia entered an event demonstrating a job technique she had used in her field of study, how to perform an EKG, placing second in the state and taking home a silver medal. In May, Sylvia graduated with an Associate degree in Medical Office Administration and three technical certificates: medical coding, medical assistant and medical office administration. In September, she passed all three national certification examinations: Certified Professional Coder, Registered Medical Assistant, and Certified Medical Administrative Specialist. She also completed a fourth certificate of proficiency in Medical Terminology. Sylvia expressed her

thanks to Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Career Pathways for moral and financial support, saying, “The assistance I received from those two organizations made it possible for me to attend school. I also want to say thank you to Ouachita Technical College’s wonderful teachers and staff. They were tough when they needed to be, but I also knew I could go to any one of them for help when I needed it, even when it meant calling them at home.” Sylvia also expressed her thanks to her outstanding family, for the sacrifices they made so she could attend school. Sylvia says she is now fully prepared to join the workforce and is eager to go to work in medical coding and have the opportunity to use her newly acquired skills and expand her knowledge even further. “Education is the magic key that opens many doors to success and after my third time in college, I can proudly say I now have my golden key.”

# Enrollment Numbers Up

Fall enrollment for 2009 has set a new record high with 1,610 students. The previous high was in Fall 2008 with 1,600 students.

Students are also enrolling in more classes. Fall 2009 enrollment includes 13,261 student semester credit hours (SSCH), a full-time equivalent of 884 (SSCH/15). This represents a six percent increase over Fall 2008 student semester credit hours (12,476).

Other Fall 2009 data are as follows:

Concurrently enrolled high school students—597;

Unduplicated students enrolled in distance ed—376;

Mean age including high school students—24; mean age excluding high school students—28;

Unduplicated students enrolled in basic skills courses—365;

Percent of students by race/ethnicity—Caucasian 85%; African-American 14%; Other 1%;

Percent of students by gender—

Female 57%; Male 43%;

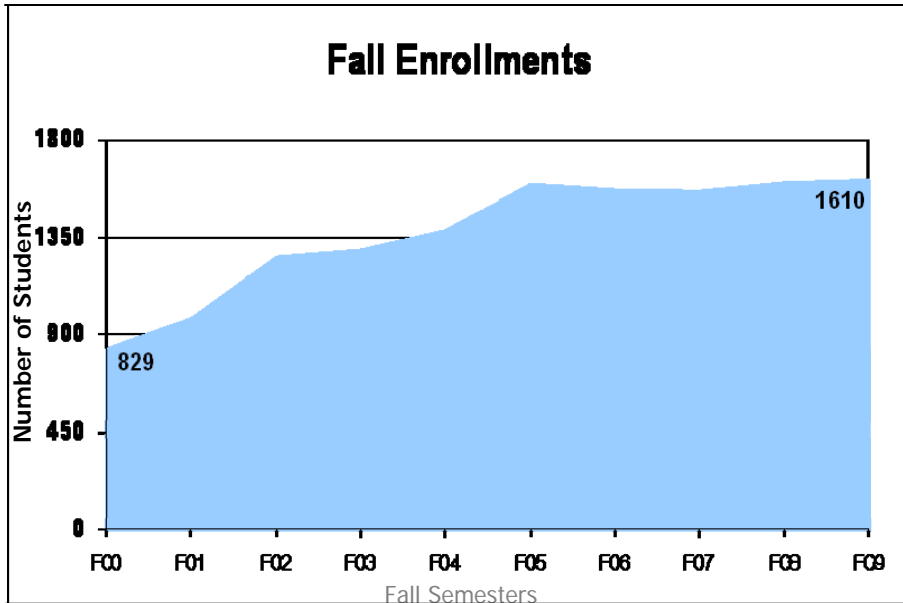
Percent of students by attendance—Part-time 62%; Full-time 38%;

Percent of students by service-area county—Hot Spring 47%; Saline 21%; Clark 12%; Grant 11%; Dallas 1%; Other 8%;

Percent of students by enrollment

status—High School 37%; Continuing 33%; First-time 15%; Re-admitted 7%; Transfer in 7%; Unclassified 1%.

Ouachita Technical College has experienced a 94% increase in fall student enrollments since Fall 2000. The chart below indicates the progression of this ten-year trend.



## OTC on Track for Reaccreditation

The five self-study committees are continuing their evaluation of the college in relationship to the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Five Criteria for Accreditation. The end result will be an improved institution and a Self-Study Report that will be submitted to the HLC in support of OTC's request for reaffirmation of its accreditation.

Final committee reports will be submitted to the Steering Committee in February. From those reports, subsequent activity, and other evaluations, the institutional self-study report will be compiled and submitted

to the Commission and to the HLC peer evaluators.

On September 20-22, 2010, four HLC peer evaluators will visit Ouachita Technical College to verify the findings of the Self-Study Report and to conduct their own evaluation. After a review process, action on OTC's reaffirmation request will be finalized by the HLC Board.

Ouachita Technical College's last HLC comprehensive visit was in September 2000. Following that visit, the college was granted the maximum 10-year period

of reaffirmed accreditation status.

Activity of each study committee and of the Steering Committee is posted to the college's internal Intranet under Higher Learning Commission. The Self-Study Plan and other informational documents are also posted to this site.

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***Changing Lives...Building Futures!***

## Sixth Annual OTC SGA Fall Fest, October 23

Ouachita Technical College's Student Government Association is hosting its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Festival on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 5:30 – 9:30 pm!

Enjoy hayrides, haunted houses, games, music, candy, goodies, and much more...

**ALL FREE to the public!! Bring kids of all ages!!**



### IN THE SPOTLIGHT

#### AMY CARTER

##### ACADEMIC ADVISOR/CAREER PLANNING SPECIALIST



Started at OTC in April, 2007.

My job responsibilities include advising and registering students and other duties as assigned.

My family includes my husband, John, and my two Dachshunds, Shadow and Coney.

My dream vacation would be a trip to Italy.

My favorite food is peanut butter.

One thing that people might not know about me is that I like to go hiking with my husband.

As a child, I wanted to be a pediatric nurse when I grew up.

My favorite thing to do in my spare time is spend time with my family and friends.

My first vehicle was a 1977 Nova.

My favorite season is Fall.

With one hour of free time I would do Sudoku puzzles.

The furthest I have traveled is the Smokey Mountains.

My biggest pet peeve is people who bully others.

My favorite thing about OTC is the friends I have made.

My favorite thing to do on a Saturday is to go shopping with my Mom and my two sisters.

### IN THE SPOTLIGHT

#### MIKE DINGLER

##### HIGH SCHOOL CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTRUCTOR



Started at OTC in May, 2006.

My job responsibilities include teaching high school students about the Criminal Justice system and how to obtain a job in that field.

My family includes my wife of 16 years, Brandi, and our two daughters, Hayley, 11, and Kelsey, 8.

The last book I read was *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

My dream vacation would be a second trip to Hawaii.

My favorite food is Bar-B-Que (any kind).

One thing that people might not know about me is that I love to cut the grass.

As a child, I wanted to be a Police Officer when I grew up.

My first vehicle was a 1985 Chevy Monte Carlo.

My favorite thing to do in my spare time is spend it with my wife and kids.

My favorite season is Fall.

My biggest pet peeve is someone who does not push their chair back under a table when they get up.

My favorite thing to do on a Saturday is watch Razorback football.

The furthest I have traveled is to Hawaii for my honeymoon.

My favorite thing about OTC is the friends I have made, including faculty, staff, and students.