



HigherEd News

Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board Quarterly Meeting

Important Dates

April 5
Presidents Council Meeting

April 22
AHECB Meeting at National Park College, Hot Springs



Tara Smith, Sr. Associate Director for Institutional Finance at ADHE

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The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) met January 29, 2016 at Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) Board Room. The board approved the review of the new policy on student placement into general education core courses. The policy addresses placement standards necessary for enrollment of students into mathematics, English composition, and reading based on appropriate indicators of potential student success rates. Institutions will develop placement models that provide appropriate justification for student course placements and allow for follow-up evaluation of placement effectiveness. If approved by the Governor and the Arkansas Legislative Council Administrative Rules and Regulations sub-committee, all institutions will adopt appropriate placement measures that are supported by student success data.

The Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program and the Governor's Distinguished Scholarship Program proposed amendments was approved by the board for submission to the Governor and Arkansas Legislative Council Administrative Rules and Regulations sub-committee. These amendments are proposed to bring the rules in line with legislation enacted by the 90th General Assembly.

The board approved the following new academic programs:

- Associate in Science in Agriculture, Black River Technical College
- Certificate of Proficiency in Commercial Vehicle Operation, University of Arkansas at Monticello, College of Technology at McGehee

- Bachelor of Arts in Game and Interactive Media Design, Arkansas Tech University
- Bachelor of Science in Geoscience, University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
- Bachelor of Science in Education Studies (Non-licensure), University of Arkansas at Monticello

In finance committee business, the board approved the Annual Higher Education Financial Condition Report and the economic feasibility of bond issue for the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton

The board elected to recommend Bob Crafton remain as Chairman and elect the following new officers, Sherrel Johnson as Vice-Chairman and Chris Gilliam as Secretary.

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Ann Clemmer, Senior Associate Director of Academic Affairs at ADHE

According to the annual report on student remediation, the percentage of students who must enroll in remedial courses to prepare for college-level course work when they enter public colleges and universities in Arkansas has declined. In fall 2015, 22,138 first-time degree seeking students entered Arkansas public institutions. That same semester, the remediation rate has fallen from 41.4 percent in 2014 to 39.7 percent in 2015; a 1.7 percent decrease. This basically means slightly less than four out of 10 students were enrolled in remedial courses. Ann Clemmer of ADHE states, "Taking remedial courses is costly and time-consuming for stu-

dents. We are pleased to see schools looking at innovative ways to help students master the necessary skills to enter into credit bearing courses and be on the path to graduate."

All entering first-year students seeking an associate degree or higher from an Arkansas public college or university must meet placement standards in the disciplines of English, mathematics, and reading. Students must take remedial courses if they score below a 19 on the ACT exam (or the equivalent on the ASSET, SAT, COMPASS, or ACCUPLACER tests). The

placement status of a student is determined by the institution based on the placement score and other relevant factors. Students are placed into remedial courses, credit-bearing courses or, in some cases, a co-requisite course which includes some remedial assistance embedded in the credit-bearing course.

"I am pleased to see that more students who begin higher education in our state are enrolling directly into college-level courses. Besides being a demotivating factor, we know that remedial course enrollments increase the time to degree for students, which increases their total cost of earning a credential." said Dr. Brett Powell,

College Investment Plan for Arkansas



Want to get a head start on paying for college for your child or grandchild? Thanks to the Arkansas 529 GIFT College Savings Plan, families have a tax-advantaged tool to encourage them to save for the expenses of higher education at nearly any two- or four-year college, university, graduate school, vocational or trade school worldwide.

Arkansas is a great place to save ahead of time for college, thanks to the Great Investment For Tomorrow, or GIFT, Arkansas 529 College Investing Plan. With the Arkansas 529 GIFT Plan, officially sponsored by the state of Arkansas, your savings can grow tax-deferred through a wide variety of Vanguard investment op-

tions. Later, the money can be withdrawn tax-free to pay for qualified higher education costs like tuition, room and board, fees, supplies and computers.

In addition, the plan offers:

- flexibility to use the funds at any eligible, accredited public or private college, university or trade school worldwide
- up to a \$5,000 Arkansas tax deduction (\$10,000 for married couples)
- tax-free withdrawals for qualified expenses (including computers)

- initial contributions as low as \$25

The thought of paying for college or trade school can be daunting. But it is important to remember to start early and that "every dollar counts!" Open your account today at www.arkansas529.org, select an Automatic Investment Plan (AIP), and allow the earning power of your dollars to work for you.

Interested in a seminar, workshop or outreach for your colleagues, teachers or parents? Contact the Arkansas 529 Plan's Executive Director Beth Anne Rankin at (501) 682-1406 or bethanne.rankin@artreasury.gov to schedule a presentation.

Strecker Joins Arkansas Department of Higher Education



Dr. Marla Strecker joined ADHE team in February 2016 as Senior Associate Director for Research & Technology.

Strecker formerly was Director of Higher Education and Adult Learning Graduate Program at Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia.



Dr. Brett Powell participates on a panel at Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN); Arkansans Ask: Paying for College. Other panelists include: Cheryl Lyons, Director of Financial Aid at University of Central Arkansas; Amy Oury, Career Counselor at Bryant High School; and Jamille Rogers, Media Specialist at Conway Public Schools. To view the panel discussion visit

<http://www.aetn.org/programs/arkansansask/payingforcollege>.



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Our Mission

The mission of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education is to advocate for higher education; to promote a coordinated system of higher education in the state; and to assist each of the publicly and locally supported institutions of higher education in the state in improving the delivery of higher education services to the citizens of Arkansas.



Dr. Brett Powell
Director

Safety Drills at ADHE



David Bertelin with Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, shared tips to prepare ADHE in the event of an active shooter.

Gov. Hutchinson declared Feb 7-13 Earthquake Awareness Week in Arkansas and ADHE participated in an earthquake drill.



Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkansas (RMHCA)



Chandra Robinson, ADHE and Kristi Finley, RMHCA

The Ronald McDonald House provides a home away from home that serves and sustains families of children being treated at area hospitals and support community programs that serve the needs of children.

ADHE collected pop tabs for the Pop Tab Program, which raises valuable funds and awareness through recycling of tabs. "Thanks ADHE for your contribution to RMHCA." says Kristi Finley. "This will assist in paying for families to stay at the Ronald McDonald House."