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**For immediate release**

## ARKANSAS COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA TEAM ATTEND SUMMIT

INDIANAPOLIS, IN- Arkansas Department of Higher Education Director Dr. Maria Markham has appointed a statewide team with a mission to increase college completion rates.

Complete College America is a team of professionals that has built an Alliance of States taking bold actions to significantly increase the number of students successfully completing college. This means students earning degrees and credentials that are valuable in the labor market and introducing strategies that help traditionally underrepresented students achieve success. The team met at the Summer Action Summit in Indianapolis, IN with other teams across the nation to learn more about strategies that can be implemented for greater student success.

The group is led by Director Markham who is responsible for guiding the team in developing goals related to CCA strategies, implementing plans and achieving results. Other members of the team represent two-year colleges, four-year universities, policymakers, diversity champions, data/metrics interpreters, and communicators.

“As a state, we are fortunate to have a collaborative effort between policy makers, higher education institutions and our agency,” said Markham. “We have a history of working with students from underserved populations to complete their college

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.

educations, and have witnessed firsthand the positive change that education has brought to their lives.”

Serving on the state’s team are Ann Clemmer, Alisha Lewis and Dr. Marla Strecker, also from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. State Representative Charlotte V. Douglas, Alma, serves as vice-chair for the House Education Committee agreed to also serve on the state’s team. Rep. Douglas represents District 75 which includes portions of Sebastian and Crawford County and is a retired educator. Dr. Todd Kitchen, Vice President of Student Services at Northwest Arkansas Community College represents the two-year colleges in Arkansas and Dr. Trakenya Gordon Dobbins, Interim Director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Advising at University of Arkansas at Little Rock serves on the team representing four-year universities.

“Strengthening Arkansas’ economy is dependent upon more students having the opportunity to go to college and succeed,” said Markham. “I am excited to have a team of passionate advocates for that mission who are working diligently to implement strategies in support of our statewide policy efforts to boost college completion rates and expand educational opportunities for all Arkansans.”

Established in 2009, Complete College America is a national nonprofit organization that works with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations. For more information, visit [www.completecollege.org](http://www.completecollege.org).

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