

# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FY 2018 – FY 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

## **MISSION:**

**The mission of ADHE is to advocate for higher education and private career education; to promote a coordinated system of higher education in the state; to provide consumer protection for students; and to assist in improving the delivery of post-secondary services to the citizens of Arkansas.**

## **VISION:**

The department's vision is to be an effective advocate for postsecondary education in Arkansas, in the belief that education enhances the quality of life, both for the individual and for our state. ADHE is a source for data, research, and service that aids students, their families, and higher education and private career institutions in reaching their potential through completion of post-secondary learning. Increased education levels indicates a more work-ready population, which will make our state more attractive to business, leading to better jobs for Arkansans.

## **CORE**

**VALUES:** Responsive, accountable, effective

**GOAL 1: RAISE COMPLETION AND GRADUATION RATES OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES BY 10%.**

ADHE Goal 1 aligns with Arkansas goals **Educate** and **Quality of Life**.

### *Measurable Objectives*

- Reduce the percentage of students needing remediation to prepare them for college-level course work.

- Reduce the time needed for students to complete remedial requirements.
- Raise first year retention rates of students to SREB regional averages.

### *Implementation/Strategic Details*

- Remediation is a major barrier to higher education completion. It is the governor's education goal to raise enrollment and graduation rates of post-secondary students. Studies show that the longer a student stays in remediation, the odds of dropping out of college rise. Given this fact, there is great importance attached to improving remediation. Studies also show that capable students often fall short when remedial placement is based on a test only. In 2016, ADHE revised the placement policy for institutions. It strongly encourages accountable placement practices that use multiple measures, such as a high school grade point, alongside a standardized exam used for placement. We have had a few campuses involved in pilot programs to assist graduating seniors (prior to fall class enrollment) with their remedial needs. Other campuses are addressing this prior to the senior year.
- Co-requisite remediation has been used by some institutions for several years, but has been continually encouraged by ADHE. This practice allows a student to be enrolled in a credit for graduation class, while also receiving some "just in time" remediation assistance.
- The higher education productivity-based funding formula passed by the 91st General Assembly completely redesigns the way institutions receive funding<sup>1</sup>. Instead of funding enrollment, institutions are funded when students complete milestones.
  1. For remedial students, the institution is rewarded only when the student finishes the gateway course that would follow the remedial course. This encourages institutions to devote resources to "best-practice" designs for remedial instruction, and better program placement for students needing help with basic skills.
  2. For year-to-year retention of students, the funding formula awards institutions when a student completes 15 hours, 30 hours, 45 hours, 60 and 90 hours. The funding formula thus encourages institutions to better engage with students to address issues or potential issues that impact the return of a student and the next successful semester.

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<sup>1</sup>The governor's Education strategy includes the goal to "Support the Higher Education Productivity Funding Model to bring consistency and efficiency to the state's career education and workforce development efforts."

## GOAL 2: INCREASE THE ENROLLMENT OF ADULT STUDENTS, AGE 25-54, BY 75%

ADHE Goal 2 aligns with Arkansas goal to **Educate** and support a path for life-long learning.

### *Measurable Objectives*

- Reduce the remedial course enrollments for adults by 50% through alternative means of preparing adults for college-level work
- Improve communication of the value of higher education to non-traditional students

### *Implementation/Strategic Details*

- ADHE has filled a Communications Director position to aid in promoting our new initiatives, which includes general outreach to attract new students to choose higher education.
- The Arkansas Future (ArFuture) Grant was part of the legislative package for the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly. It offers financial assistance to traditional and non-traditional students, even working students who might otherwise be ineligible for aid. This program will assist under-employed persons in increasing their job marketability and addresses the governor's goal to "align education and economic development initiatives with the needs of business."

The new productivity-based funding formula for higher education, passed by the General Assembly in 2017, incentivizes institutions for addressing adult remediation. Many colleges already have programs that allow students to engage in "refresher" work that would allow the successful student to bypass remediation. The funding model rewards colleges whose adult student population succeeds at meeting completion goals, and in so doing encourages innovation in recruitment and retention of this population group.

ADHE Goal 3 aligns with Arkansas goals for **Quality of Life**.

### *Measurable Objectives*

- Raise the overall college-going rate for all student groups by 5% from 50.1% to 55.1%
- Raise the underserved student college-going rate to equal that of other students
- Raise completion rates of underserved student groups equal to other students.

### *Implementation/Strategic Details*

- ArFuture Grant awards all Arkansas students regardless of age or income and allows for awards to non-traditional students, and/or students whose post-secondary education was interrupted or delayed. This grant will reach working students and others who may be ineligible for federal financial aid. This scholarship covers tuition and fees at the level of a two-year school.
- The new higher education productivity-based funding formula establishes a new funding formula that incentivizes colleges and universities for various student success levels achieved; it rewards institutions at a higher rate when underserved populations succeed.

## GOAL 4: IMPROVE COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY THROUGH EFFECTIVE RESOURCE ALLOCATION.

ADHE Goal 4 aligns with Arkansas goals **Grow, Educate** and **Quality of Life**.

### *Measurable Objectives*

- Reduced time to degree for students
- Allocate 25% of state scholarship funds to need-based programs
- Re-allocate institutional spending to maximize efficiency and effectiveness

### *Implementation/Strategic Details*

- ArFuture Grant awards all Arkansas students regardless of age or income.
- The new higher education productivity-based funding formula incentivizes campuses for both “on-time” graduation and for “hours at completion” when a student graduates. These measures encourage campuses to engage in close monitoring of student class schedules, so that unnecessary courses are not taken, and that students sign up for and complete enough hours each semester to allow them to graduate on time.

## GOAL 5: ENHANCE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATION TO ALLOW FOR MEETING THE AGENCY MISSION EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY.

ADHE Goal 5 supports the Arkansas goal **Efficient and Responsive**.

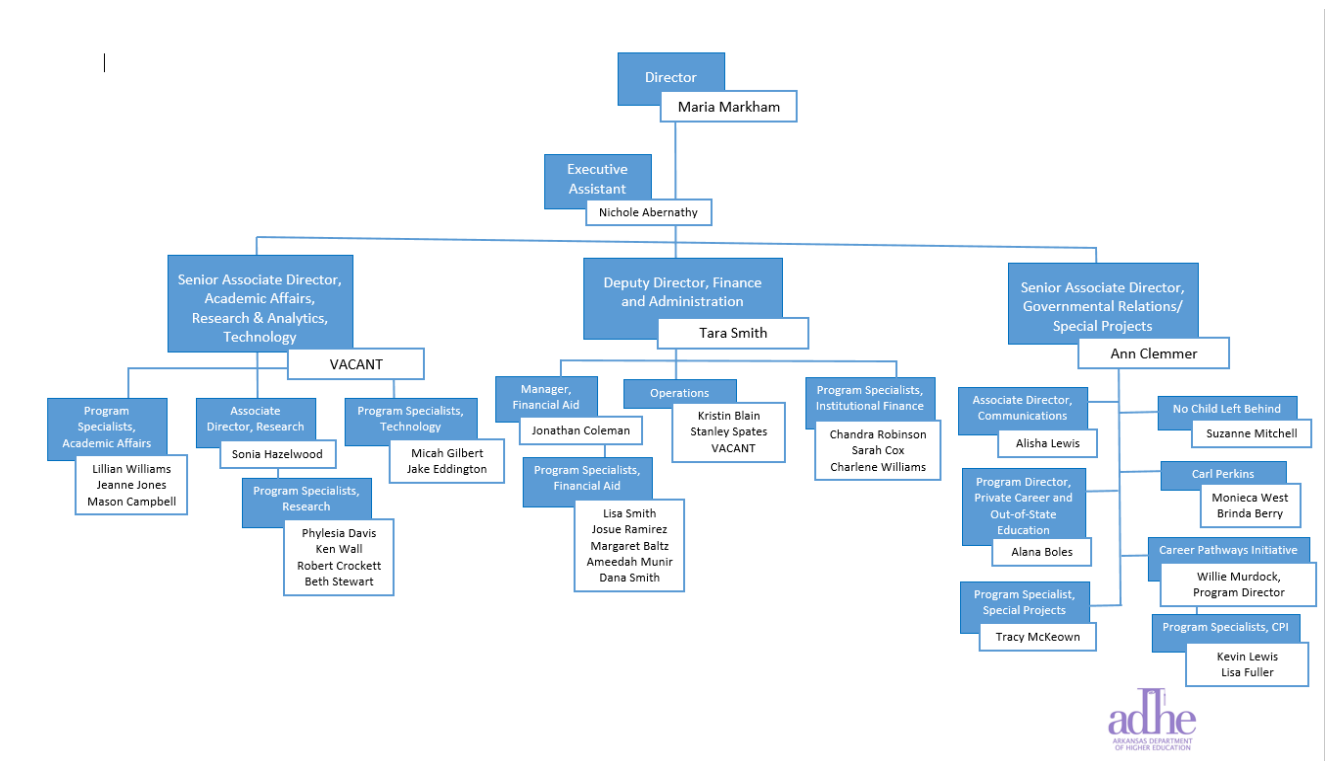
### Measurable Objectives

- Conduct annual surveys of the agency staff to measure employee engagement with the mission and strategic goals.
- Maintain a minimum of 90% of employees that understand the mission and objectives of the agency.

### Implementation/Strategic Details

- Implement better internal communication strategies agency-wide.
- Improve interdepartmental information by sharing objectives and department specific, mission-related tasks.

### Arkansas Department of Higher Education Organizational Chart



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