



Summer, 2012

"If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we are not really living." ~Gail Sheehy, American Author
SouthArk is definitely on- the-grow in many ways. We are growing in student success in developmental courses and on programmatic exams, services provided, programs offered, external sources of funding, method of course delivery, student activities, physical land holding and buildings, and breadth of recognition of the college in the region. Growth requires vision. Growth requires planning. Growth requires assessing and analyzing what we do well and what we can do better. Growth requires changes in thinking and action. Growth and changes such as ours require us all to stretch and to work outside of our comfort zones. Thank you for your willingness to embrace growth and change for the betterment of our students, our institution, and our region.

The summer has been filled with many activities and happenings. This newsletter attempts to update you on a few of the events, actions, and undertakings occurring on campus this summer.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Summer Enrollment: Our enrollment in Summer I and Long Summer classes is down from last summer; largely attributable to a discontinuation of Pell Grant funding for summer courses. Dr. Tully-Dartez reports that Summer I and Long summer enrollment is down 11.5% with a 10.5% decrease in student semester credit hour. These numbers are similar to summer of 2010.

Summer Commencement: Southark will have its very first summer commencement and Kyle Swift, Medical Center of South Arkansas CEO, will be the commencement speaker. We have 175 candidates for graduation. Also, interesting to note, is that we will have our very first Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) class graduating, as well as our very first Process Technology graduate. The commencement will be held at the El Dorado Conference Center on **Friday, August 3rd at 7PM.**

Respiratory Therapy Accreditation Site Visit: The Commission of Accreditation in Respiratory Care site surveyors visited SouthArk on Monday and Tuesday June 18-19. These surveyors were very professional and thorough. We will receive an official report following the November 2012 Board meeting. The surveyors did not identify any deficiencies that we were not aware of up front. The majority of deficiencies will be corrected and responses ready to send as soon as we receive the report. A major concern was that the program does not have a Director of Clinical Education (DCE). We interviewed and will potentially offer that position next week and remove those deficiencies. A second concern was the lack of clinical sites for critical care experience. We continue to seek clinical sites to provide this experience and believe that the new DCE will be helpful in successful eliminating this situation. We believe the program will receive full accreditation as soon as the report is issued and we have the opportunity to respond to the findings.



College and Career Readiness Program: SouthArk held an ACT prep boot camp for high school rising juniors called College Bound Academy (CBA) which began in the later part of May and ended June 8, 2012. The College Bound Academy grew out of a partnership with Union County High Schools that was funded by the Arkansas Department of Education's College and Career Readiness Planning Program (CCRPP) grant. The Union County high schools that participated were El Dorado, Junction City, Norphlet, Parkers Chapel, Smackover, and Strong-Huttig. The grant allowed SouthArk to work in conjunction with Union County

high schools to identify 64 students to work on their study skills to be competitive on the ACT test. All the participants in the program sat for the ACT test on Saturday, June 9, 2012 the last test of the summer. There were two cohort groups established; one group was located on SouthArk's West Campus, and the other group on the El Dorado High School campus. Twenty-one students from these groups sat for the ACT test for the very first time. A ceremony was held on the last day of the program and each student was awarded a NetBook portable computer.



Upward Bound Scholar's Academy: Director Debra Mock shares: Students have attended the 6 weeks program on the SouthArk campus from 8-3 with a lunch break in the BISTRO. Their weeks were filled with many fun and interesting learning and growing activities. STEM activities for lab science were directed by Jeff Ulmer, exploring Discoid Roach neuroscience. Math instructor Matt Griffin led students to build and program robots that solve Rubix cubes. Tyrone Davis guided literacy instruction paired with Youth Entrepreneurship to give students the opportunity to see themselves overcoming odds much as

did Clifton Taulbert, the Pulitzer Nominated author of "Who Owns the Ice House?". Studying the late 1950's and early 60's of the Mississippi Delta also offered a great opportunity to explore music and dance from the time period. Sekou Sangare, foreign language instructor, gave students a look at the world through a study of the United Nations, learning about challenges that their generation and future generations will face. Using the theme, "Marketing Yourself", Martha Dunn and Anwar Fairley helped UB students prepare for video-taped interviews. Roy Williams guided UB students to build their self-confidence and communications skills as they practiced presenting self-chosen business ideas in a 60-Second Elevator Pitch. The UB students will travel to Dallas the week of June 25th. On Friday, July 6th, Upward Bound students, staff, guests, and parents will celebrate at the 5th annual Upward Bound Awards Banquet in the El Dorado Conference Center.

Bridge to College Algebra: This summer South Arkansas Community College, the El Dorado Public School District, and the El Dorado Education Foundation will again partner to provide El Dorado High School students the Bridge to College Algebra (B2CA) summer program. The program begins July 2nd and ends July 26th. We have twenty-six students enrolled in the program. The goal of the program is to prepare students for the rigors of college-level coursework, namely in the area of college mathematics.



Camp Lotsafun: Jamie McConathy, Director of Continuing Education, shares: Enthusiasm and ingenuity define Camp Lotsafun 2012. Entering our fourth and final week, we have served 74 students from Union, Ouachita, and Ashley counties. Led by an excellent staff of teachers, students have experienced learning hands-on in classes like *Get to Know Galileo*, *Pedometer Challenge*, *Mystique's Magical Workshop*, and *Dino Discovery*. Whether creating flying objects from recycled materials or striving for gold at the Camp Lotsafun Olympics, students' positive attitudes and teamwork are well noted. We look forward to the new *Time Travelers* program launching July 9th and hope to see continued growth of our community education programs for youth throughout the upcoming year.

Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB): SouthArk is hosting the AHECB for its quarterly meeting at the El Dorado Conference Center on July 26th and 27th (Thursday and Friday). The AHECB members, Arkansas Department of Higher Education staff, and administrators from higher education institutions from across Arkansas will be represented at this quarterly meeting. For those employees working this summer, we will need "all hands on deck" to make our visitors feel welcome at SouthArk and in our community. Please wear your SouthArk collar shirts these days so that visitors can identify us, if they have questions. Thanks!

COLLEGE UPDATES

Health and Dental Insurance: South Arkansas Community College is a member of the Arkansas Higher Education

Consortium which provides health insurance to its member employees. The Consortium is a self-funded entity that collects premiums and therefore provides funds for payment of claims to health care providers. Effective July 1, 2012, dental and health premiums are increasing by ten percent (10%). The college will cover this increase for employees. If you have family coverage, please contact the Benefits office to determine your new premiums. The last health insurance premium increase was July 1, 2006.

Performance Evaluations: We appreciate all of our supervisors for completing their employee evaluations by the due date. This is a time-consuming but a very important and necessary task designed to assist in ongoing self- and departmental-improvement and performance. With the Governor's approval for classified staff and upon recommendation and approval by the Executive Cabinet and the Board of Trustees, we are excited that we are financially and governmentally able to award merit pay to those receiving a satisfactory or better evaluation. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to our students, college, and community!

Holiday Schedule for 12-13: We have had some questions concerning the 2012-13 holiday schedule. The Holiday Schedule for fiscal year 2012-13 is reflective of the official state holidays authorized for classified employees. Professional staff and classified employees may use compensatory leave or annual leave on December 28th and December 31st. Additional information will be provided to employees and departments by supervisors.

AREON-SATCO Huts: The huts are scheduled to be set the week of June 25th (AREON) and July 7th (SATCO) adjacent to the southwest corner of the Health Science parking lot. Once the huts are set, fencing will be constructed. Electrical and gas installation will follow after the huts are set. The companies hope to "power up" by early July. They expect to be able to connect us sometime in the fall. This will generate an increase in much needed bandwidth.

Street Improvements: Please notice the new curb and pavement on Barton southeast of the Health Science building. We are extremely appreciative for the work completed by the City in repairing this section of the street and entrance to the campus. Demolition of houses should begin soon.

FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES



Heritage Plaza: Plans for **Heritage Plaza** were announced in April. Various giving levels and naming opportunities are available to honor or memorialize friends and family. The Foundation is busy informing the community and asking for support of this project for the college. As noted in the Heritage Plaza literature, "Heritage Plaza will be a visual representation of the college's legacy for SouthArk students and employees, as well as the community. Built at the very heart of the SouthArk campus, a location that has always been home to a learning institution since El Dorado's earliest days, the plaza will be a lively

gathering place ringed with benches, planters, landscaping, and grassy lawns, where our students and faculty can interact on a daily basis, as well as a central location for special events." With the addition of much needed facilities over the past years, the plaza will "tie together" the west campus and connect the campus with the city. I have made my pledge. I hope you will consider supporting this worthy project, as well.

An Evening with the Stars was held on April 28th with over 185 guests in attendance at the El Dorado Conference Center. It was a beautiful evening filled with much fun, dancing, and visiting. This fund raising gala recognized friends of the college, D.R. and Jane James, outstanding alumni, Patty Cardin and Mike McGough, and our outstanding SouthArk faculty/staff. The event brought in a record \$18,000 in support of the College.

SouthArk Outdoor Expo: The flagship Foundation fundraiser, Outdoor Expo, plans are already underway. Exhibitors, vendors and rib cooking teams may contact the Foundation office for more information. This year Neal Rohrbach, host of the Outdoor Channel's Outdoor Outfitters, will be the headliner, presenting seminars on hunting and the outdoors. It is sure to be even bigger and better than last year!

GRANTS

With limited state funding, seeking sources of external funding to support colleges and universities has become the norm for institutions of higher education and SouthArk. Thank you to everyone involved in writing, researching, and proposing concepts for grants for SouthArk. Listed below are some of the new grants awarded to the college:

Upward Bound: The Department of Education announced that SouthArk will receive, once again, an Upward Bound grant in the amount of **\$263,000** for 2012-13 with projected funding for 4 additional years at the same annual level (**total of ~\$1.3 million**). This was a very difficult competition with over 200 existing programs in the nation NOT being refunded. Debra Mock, Dr. Hill, and Cynthia Reyna, and our consultants are to be commended. This program will provide academic preparation and college readiness for 63 high school students. Activities include tutoring, academic advisement, college entrance preparation, financial literacy instruction, mentoring, and career exploration.

Hill-Romm: Dr. George Roberts received a VEST Airway Clearance System from Hill-Romm for the respiratory therapy program. This equipment is valued **at \$10,500** and will enable students to gain hands-on learning in a respiratory lab.

Entergy: Biology instructor **Matthew Connior** applied for and received **\$10,000 from Entergy** to purchase Vernier interfaces and probes for use in the natural sciences department laboratory. This equipment will enable students to apply math skills and critical thinking to solve technical problems using computer programs combined with chemical and molecular data.

Murphy Foundation: Larry Powell and Beth Burns wrote proposals to the Murphy Foundation. We were fortunate to receive funding in support of the Stepping Stones program for two years and for the developing Performing and Media Arts program for three years (if we match their challenge grant).

Bistro Update: The SouthArk Bistro will start accepting fax and phone orders for lunch on Monday, July 2, 2012. The fax form and menu can be found on the website at www.southark.edu/conference under "Order Form." Fax and phone orders must be received into the Bistro no later than 10:00am. The Bistro will accept orders for sandwiches, salads, and the daily soup and lunch special. Daily specials are emailed every Monday and can also be found on the website under "Daily Specials." The bistro accepts cash, credit cards or "Bistro Bucks." The bistro is open Monday-Thursday 8am to 3pm and Friday 8am to noon. Bistro Fax: 870-875-7258 Bistro Phone: ext. 247

Planning Retreats: The Board of Trustees will hold a retreat in August to review the College accomplishments, financial status, college strategic plan outcomes, and student learning outcomes. They will use these findings to set priorities for the future of the college. College Administrators will also hold a planning retreat in July to make plans for the coming year.

Wow! You have been busy! We are about midway through the summer, and the days are longer and the temperatures are heating up. I hope you and your family will take some time to rest and relax over the next few weeks. Rick and I have been busy building a house, but will be joining family for a niece's wedding in Michigan in early August. It will be a little vacation, some family reunion, and a time to celebrate.

Fall 2012 will be filled with not only new students, but also new opportunities and probably some new challenges, as such is the rhythm of life of institutions of higher learning. Please enjoy the remainder of your summer – whether teaching or vacationing. When we return to campus in August, let's all be ready to engage in a new academic year filled with excitement and promise – prepared to help our students to be successful in the classroom and in the workplace, but especially in life.

Stay safe and cool,

Barbara R. Jones