EMBRACING GROWTH IS THE KEY

DIRECTOR’S ANNUAL REPORT 2008 - 2009

Ardmore Higher Education Center
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Mary Ray        Office Manager
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Lisa Dillon, Campus Liaison
Growth. Embracing growth is the solution, but it is only possible with adequate facilities and resources. Growing higher education in Ardmore much beyond current levels will require a unified effort on the part of our community. As a community and a region, we need to engage in a strategy to begin construction of a new campus now. Then we can leverage our local investment in higher education to obtain legislative support for a college campus in Ardmore.

2008-09 has been a banner year for the Ardmore Higher Education Center. This report spotlights many of our accomplishments during the last year.

Continuing a pattern of increasing enrollment, AHEC experienced record enrollment during the fall, spring, and summer semesters of 2008-09. In fact, enrollment at AHEC has increased by almost 60% over the last ten years. Increased enrollment is news that gives us cause for celebration and apprehension. Although business is booming at AHEC, our current facilities and resources limit how much growth beyond current levels that we can sustain.

This past year AHEC offered 820 college courses to 3,635 students during the fall, spring, and summer semesters—that’s more than 300 college courses to almost 1,500 students per semester. Amazingly, AHEC provides this magnitude of programming utilizing leased and donated facilities. AHEC’s main building, which was built when we served a smaller student population, has only twelve classrooms, making it necessary to rent additional classroom space in Ardmore High School. To alleviate crowding, Murray State College placed three modular buildings adjacent to the main AHEC facility three years ago, but even that space is becoming crowded. ECU opened a Bachelor of Nursing program in Ardmore two years ago. Mercy Memorial Health Center had to renovate space in an old supermarket to accommodate the program because no space was available at AHEC. Now, the nursing program has maxed out its space even before enrollment in the program is completely ramped up.

In lower division programming, we are experiencing stresses on lab space for science courses that are prerequisites for admission into nursing and other health-related programs.

Although past legislative sessions have not produced the enabling legislation needed to establish a college campus in Ardmore as all of us hoped, the increasing demand for higher education in southern Oklahoma will not permit us to wait and see what happens in future legislative sessions. We must not let the strains of rapid growth on our current higher education delivery system relegate us to the point where we start saying “No” to more programs, more courses, and more students. We need to address the pressing higher education needs of our 1,600 current students now, as well as plan for a future college campus.

So while we are planning a future college campus, let us not lose sight of the expanding higher education needs of the students we already have.

Steven C. Mills, Ph.D.
Director/CEO
ABOUT ARDMORE HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER

Ardmore was the location for the first Oklahoma off-campus higher education consortium established by Oklahoma statute. Begun as a nontraditional experiment in the higher education delivery in 1974, the Ardmore Higher Education Center (AHEC) continues to utilize technology combined with face-to-face classroom instruction to meet the higher education needs of south central Oklahoma.

AHEC is comprised of four public higher education institutions cooperatively offering courses and degree programs: East Central University-Ada, Murray State College-Tishomingo, Southeastern Oklahoma State University-Durant, and Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City.

AHEC is governed by a statutory ten-member board of trustees appointed by the governor. The board of trustees receives a state appropriation, collects tuition and fees, submits a budget, and approves all courses and programs offered at AHEC.

AHEC is located in facilities owned by Ardmore City Schools and adjacent to the Ardmore High School campus. AHEC uses ten to twelve classrooms in the Ardmore High School for evening classes.

UNIVERSITY BRANCH CAMPUS

In 2007, the AHEC Board of Trustees resolved to transition to a university branch campus. AHEC has requested the Oklahoma legislature to affiliate it with a public university in Oklahoma and has developed a master plan for a new campus. AHEC plans to begin construction of the first building on the new campus soon. The construction of a new campus will provide a permanent location for the university branch campus when enabling legislation is enacted.
At the end of the fiscal year, $300,000 was transferred from the General Operating Fund to the Capital Outlay Fund, leaving a cash balance of $425,000 in the General Operating Fund. With the addition of capital bond funds of over $680,000, AHEC has almost $1.75 million to allocate towards the first phase of construction for a new campus.

Funding. The General Operating Fund for 2008-09 had revenues of over $1.5 million. About half (49%) of operating revenues were provided by tuition and fees with state appropriations through the Oklahoma State Regents providing 51% of revenues. Over half of AHEC operating expenditures (56%) were spent on salaries and benefits and 44% of expenditures were spent on general operations. For the fiscal year, overall expenditures were 89% of total revenues, allowing AHEC to maintain a healthy cash balance in view of potential cuts in state appropriations in FY 2010.
Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Marian Opala administered the oath of office to new trustees, Gary Farabough and Kirk Rodden, at the September 2008 board meeting. Justice Opala also spoke to U.S. Government and History classes at AHEC and to the Ardmore Rotary Club.

Fall Cookout and Spring Fling

Fall Cookout was on Thursday, September 18, 2008. Spring Fling, sponsored by Murray State College and AHEC was held Saturday, April 25, 2009, to provide outdoor fun and entertainment for all students at AHEC and their families.

Cuban Art Exhibit

AHEC sponsored the Second Annual Cuban Art Exhibit at the Goddard Center, July-September, 2008. The exhibit was a new collection of contemporary paintings from Eastern Cuba. The exhibit was unique because of the limited cultural and artistic exchange between the U.S. and Cuba.

Graduation Reception

The 5th Annual AHEC Graduation Reception was held on May 19, 2009 at the Ardmore Convention Center.
Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)

AHEC houses EOC counselors Kirk Rushing, from East Central University and Deborah Godwin, from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. EOC is a federally-funded program that assists individuals ages 19 and over who are interested in entering or re-entering post-secondary education. Services are free and include assistance with financial aid, career exploration, and applying for admission to post-secondary education.

Admissions Policy

Students taking classes at AHEC should meet the admissions and transfer standards of their participating institution. Generally an open admission policy is provided for freshmen students through the participation of Murray State College.

Costs

Average annual tuition and fees for an undergraduate student enrolling in 30 hours are $3,765.

Financial Aid

Scholarships, federal grants and loans are available for students who qualify. Financial aid is administered through the participating institutions. In addition to federal and state financial aid funds, the participating institutions award tuition fee waivers on a competitive basis based on financial need and academic achievement. Students who do not qualify for financial aid from federal or state sources, may apply for scholarships through the AHEC Foundation.

Library And Technology Resources

The Mary Jane Hamilton Library at AHEC is available for use by students, faculty, staff members and citizens of our service area. The library collection includes approximately 16,000 volumes and patrons may also access over 16,000 books online through netLibrary.com. The library subscribes to approximately 150 professional journals and magazines, and offers access to several full-text electronic databases for journals, magazines, and newspapers. Library patrons may also request materials not available at AHEC through the interlibrary loan service.

AHEC has a facility-wide wireless network. Students may access the Internet with their laptop computer or other mobile device via the wireless network on campus. Students have access to computer technology in the library lab, the computer lab, and at public access computers in the student lobby.

AHEC has seven interactive television (ITV) classrooms. The classrooms are equipped to receive and/or broadcast video conferences via the Internet. AHEC broadcasts and/or receives approximately 80 courses each semester with MSC, ECU, SE, and OSU/OKC using ITV.
**Non-Credit Course Enrollment Report**

Continuing Education programs provide lifelong learning opportunities from youth to senior adults. Our Continuing Education program includes CEU and credentialing opportunities in real estate as well as professional improvement opportunities in conversational Spanish, ESL, and ACT test preparation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Courses Offered</th>
<th>Course Hours</th>
<th>Enrollments</th>
<th>Contact Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>2646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>4135.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>2461</td>
<td>8306.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>479.5</td>
<td>2884</td>
<td>8886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kids to Kollege** is an experiential learning program for students ages 10-14 held during the summer. AHEC in partnership with Ardmore City Schools and the Southern Oklahoma Technology Center offers a fun-filled week of challenging learning opportunities for young students. Kids to Kollege courses are intended to stimulate math and science awareness, creativity, and critical thinking. The 2009 Kids to Kollege program provided classes in drama, science, computers, and culinary arts.

**Enrichment for the Young at Heart**
Senior University is a program which provides interesting and fun enrichment and learning opportunities for adults 55 and over. Senior University received the 2009 Exceptional Program Award from the Great Plains Region of the Association for Continuing Higher Education during the Regional conference held in Norman, February, 2009.
**Headcount by Academic Year - Last 10 Years**

**Enrollment Summary Fiscal Year 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Spring 2009</th>
<th>Summer 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>1462</td>
<td>1426</td>
<td>747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Degree Seeking</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Students</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Southern Oklahoma Higher Education Foundation was established in 2006 as the supporting foundation for the Ardmore Higher Education Center or any succeeding institution. The Foundation was established to fund and administer scholarships for AHEC students and to provide a funding mechanism for future capital campaigns to construct new campus facilities.

The 2008-09 fiscal year was the Foundation’s second full year of operation. During this year, the Foundation began administering the distribution of scholarship funds and investments.

### Ada Mae Smith Endowment and Scholarship Fund

The estate of the late Ada Mae Smith of Ardmore provided funding for an endowment to establish a scholarship fund for students at AHEC. The Ada Mae Smith Scholarship Fund provides scholarships to pay tuition and fees for African-American students residing in Carter County, Oklahoma, who enroll as students at the Ardmore Higher Education Center. During 2008-09, the first Ada Mae Smith Scholarships were awarded to eight students in the amount of $500 each. The Ada Mae Smith Scholarship Fund is managed by the Southern Oklahoma Higher Education Foundation.

### Scholarships

In all, 34 scholarships averaging over $700 were awarded during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters of 2008-09 to AHEC students from scholarship grants received from local foundations and the AHEC Foundation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship Fund</th>
<th>Amount Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry Bridge Foundation Scholarship</td>
<td>$2,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Barr Trust &amp; McCrory Foundation</td>
<td>$17,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada Mae Smith Scholarships</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** $24,046
From its beginning, in the summer of 1974, AHEC grew under Darnell’s leadership from 100 to 1,100 students in the fall 1991 semester. His vision was to create a center that would provide a better-educated work force for southern Oklahoma.

Darnell’s career in education spanned 40 years and included several years as a classroom teacher in Tupelo and Ada, Oklahoma and Hobbs, New Mexico. Darnell returned to the Ardmore area in 1972 to serve as coordinator of the Chickasaw Area Learning Center, a research project for East Central University. Even though the learning center did not include area colleges offering courses, it served as the inspiration for the AHEC pilot project.

After several years in the renovated old Mt. Washington Elementary School, the AHEC pilot project was made a permanent part of Oklahoma’s higher education system. As AHEC quickly grew, Darnell led community fund-raising efforts and new facilities were constructed in 1981. Under Darnell’s leadership, three more additions were added to the original facility to house a library, chemistry laboratory, and a technology wing.

Upon his retirement in 1992, Darnell said “The more than eighteen years I have spent in service to the higher education needs of this area have been both challenging and rewarding. In no other effort in my 40-year career in education has so much support and goodwill been shown by so many.” On October 21, 1992, the AHEC Board of Trustees named the Bill H. Darnell Student Lounge in recognition of his years of service and contribution to AHEC.

On October 17, 1995, Darnell was inducted into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame. Although greatly honored by the distinction, Darnell felt it should include the community of people in Ardmore and the surrounding areas that were responsible for the success of AHEC.