

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

March 5, 2010

Report from
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Arkansas State University–Jonesboro

Introduction

Much of the major news at ASU-Jonesboro in recent weeks has pertained to numbers. The spring semester enrollment of 12,411 exceeded the previous spring enrollment by 12.2% and set a record. The total also exceeded the fall 2009 enrollment and thus became the largest semester enrollment ever recorded at ASU-Jonesboro. As we continue to celebrate our past and anticipate a bright future during ASU's centennial year, 2009-10, the record is particularly gratifying as a tribute to the fine programs and excellent opportunities that faculty and staff have developed to attract so many students, especially graduate-level, international, and distance learning students. The additional tuition revenue has been crucial in helping offset the most recent cut in state funding.

The numbers from Washington, D.C. also are impressive, as we were able to report recently that the appropriations for new and continuing research projects and service activities will total approximately \$21.6 million in fiscal 2010. We deeply appreciate Congressman Marion Berry and Senators Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor for their excellent work to support and advance the funding proposals that the university submitted for consideration. The university is also grateful to those on campus who prepared the proposals and developed the budget requests. Congressional funding is critical as we continue to advance our research agenda by establishing a foundation for more competitively-awarded grants in the future, and by gaining recognition as a research-intensive institution.

Here are some highlights from the various university divisions, covering the period since the last report:

Academic Affairs and Research

- **Laboratory Upgrades:** Planning is underway to utilize effectively \$2.3 million of federal Economic Stimulus Funds to upgrade laboratories in science and engineering and it is expected that the project will be bid out during the next 60 days and completed this summer. A portion of this upgrade will involve eliminating hazardous conditions revealed in a comprehensive risk management inspection of these laboratories.
- **New Scientific Research Equipment:** A process has been launched to purchase new scientific research equipment from a one-time allocation of General Improvement Funds. By the end of the fiscal year, \$1.5 million will be expended for this purpose. This will address directly the need for this equipment in support of the Colleges of Agriculture and Technology, Engineering, Sciences and Mathematics, Education, and Nursing and Health Professions.
- **Searches Postponed:** In order to save funds to help meet the reductions in legislative appropriations, the searches for the associate vice chancellor for academic services, and deans of the Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences, Communications, Regional Programs, and the Library have been held in abeyance and the associated duties and responsibilities have been assigned to others.
- **Congressional Funding:** ASUJ, with counsel from Tim and Randi Hutchinson and under the leadership of Dr. Glen Jones and Dr. Michael Dockter, was successful in attracting \$21.6 million in federal funding in fiscal 2010 to support research and other forms of sponsored programs activities.

Student Affairs

- **Student Recruitment:** As of January 31, first-time freshmen applications are up 26% and admitted students are up 20% from the same time last year. Two-year transfer applications are up 40% and admitted students are up 35%. Staff recruiters conducted admit and offer days on high school campuses, admitting and offering scholarships on the spot. Visits to high schools and two-year campuses and targeted communications have helped boost recruitment.
- **Lottery Scholarship:** The Arkansas Promise Scholarship, a new A-State scholarship for recipients of the Arkansas Challenge/Lottery Scholarship, will cover tuition and fees for up to eight semesters. Arkansas high school 2010 graduates with a minimum ACT of 22 (or comparable SAT) and GPA of 3.00 or higher are eligible.
- **Aid to Students:** Financial Aid and Scholarships disbursed \$46.4 million to students in fall 2009. The spring 2010 disbursement is \$41.3 million thus far, bringing the total for the year to approximately \$87.5 million.
- **Red WOLF Center:** Following a grand opening for the new recreation and wellness facility on January 19, weekday participant count has averaged approximately 1,200. Space in the Student Union, made available after the Fitness Club's move, will be renovated to include a coffee/computer lounge, multicultural center, non-traditional student lounge, meeting rooms, and executive dining room.
- **Living-Learning Communities:** Construction is underway for two living-learning community (LLC) residential facilities scheduled to open in August 2010. Themes have been selected: The STEM Den will house 50 students in science, technology, engineering, and math, and the other will house 50 ROTC cadets dedicated to improving leadership and unit cohesion.
- **Cafeteria Expansion:** The new seating area in Acansa Dining Hall, which accommodates about 220, opened in late January.

Finance and Administration

- **Award for Excellence:** Facilities Management has completed an extensive self evaluation and development process, ongoing for several years, and submitted documentation for award consideration by the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers (APPA).
- **Budget Reduction:** The Office of Budget Planning and Development analyzed the current operating budget to create a strategy to respond to the additional 2.4% state revenue reduction announced in January. The second reduction this fiscal year created an additional \$1.3 million shortfall in university revenues. The plenary stage for the development of the fiscal 2011 operating budget is underway.
- **Flu Clinic:** Environmental Health and Safety completed a flu clinic with the Arkansas Department of Health, College of Nursing and Health Professions, and St. Bernards Medical Center in December.
- **Beat the Pack:** Wellness and Health Promotion is leading the ASU Employee Smoking Cessation Program (four-week program) in preparation of a smoke-free campus.
- **Affirmative Action Plan:** All data for the 2010 Annual Affirmative Action Plan has been submitted with additional work being completed due to vast changes in the State's classified pay table.
- **Legislative Audit:** The office of Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance/Controller successfully coordinated and completed the fiscal 2009 audit conducted by the Arkansas Division of Legislative Audit. Arkansas State University System again received an unqualified audit opinion.
- **Banner 8 Upgrade:** Information Technology Services successfully upgraded the university enterprise computing system to Banner version 8. All business operations of the university were involved in the successful upgrade.

University Advancement

- Giving Exceeds \$8 million: For the six-month period ending December 31, 2009, University Advancement recorded 10,796 gifts from 4,477 individual donors for a total of \$8.36 million. This is 6% less than last year, which was ASU's best year ever.
- Popular for Events: Cooper Alumni Center (CAC) continues to be well utilized by the campus and the community. Between December 1, 2009, and February 10, 2010, CAC booked 36 events with a total of 2,023 attendees. Ten events were booked for the last two weeks of February.
- Alumni Directory: The production of the centennial year edition of the Alumni Directory is on schedule with delivery anticipated in early April. There were 1,823 directories sold, with proceeds earmarked to improve the ASU Alumni Association's web presence.
- Website Modification: Barkley REI consulted with faculty, staff, students and alumni and has filed a report outlining recommendations for ASU-Jonesboro to upgrade its website and make it more user friendly. The university is now working on implementing the recommendations to update the current website and infrastructure to meet constituent demands.
- Arkansas Promise Scholarship: On February 12, a new micro site was launched on the ASUJ home page to promote a new scholarship, The Arkansas Promise, for prospective new incoming freshmen who also receive the Arkansas Academic Challenge/Lottery Scholarship (see details under Student Affairs).
- Publications Production: This past quarter alone, the Publications and Creative services team completed 308 projects for ASU-Jonesboro and the ASU System.

Athletics

- Athletic Director's Honor Roll: The 165 student-athletes on the fall 2009 Athletic Director's Honor Roll, including 32 with a 4.0 GPA, were recognized for their academic achievements during the February 15 men's basketball game.
- Head Soccer Coach: A former Gulf South Conference Coach of the Year, Tafadzwa Ziyenge, was named the fourth all-time ASU head women's soccer coach on January 28.
- Catalina Induction: Nelson Catalina, who led ASU to four NIT appearances as head men's basketball coach, was inducted into the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame on February 19.
- Convocation Center Media/Film Room: Renovations to the media/film room in the Convocation Center neared completion and, with wall graphics the only remaining upgrade, is already in use. The room features a media work area, new carpeting and paint, and theatre seating with leather chairs bearing embroidered ASU logos.
- Recruiting Round-up: The football program held its annual "Recruiting Round-up" at the Cooper Alumni Center on February 4. The coaching staff visited with 150 fans and showed video of all 26 signees who are part of the 2010 recruiting class.
- Football Schedule: The non-conference portion of the 2010 football schedule has been completed. It includes a home game against Louisville and road games at Auburn, Indiana and Navy.
- Senior Prom: On March 12, Athletics will hold its sixth annual Senior Prom, which has gained national exposure in years past through sports publications.
- Division Leader: With just four conference games remaining, the men's basketball team leads the Sun Belt Conference West Division standings as of February 16.