

Transitions: *Tran-si-tions (noun) uncomfortable ends followed by hopeful new beginnings* ~Randi G. Fine

“How strange that the nature of life is change, yet the nature of human beings is to resist change. And how ironic that the difficult times we fear might ruin us are the very ones that can break us open and help us blossom into who we were meant to be.” —

[Elizabeth Lesser, *Broken Open: How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow*](#)

While reflecting on a theme for this issue of *Barb's Wire* I kept coming back to the concept of transitions. March is a time of transitions from the cold of winter to the rebirth of spring. Many SouthArk employees have experienced personal issues, lost friends and family members, endured health problems, or are expecting upcoming birth. Personally, Rick and I have experienced transitions through the passing of his mother and all the emotions, memories, and responsibilities that brings. On campus we have employees that are soon to retire, new hires, or transferring to new positions. We have new grants to implement, new programs, and new courses. Technology continues to change, and we will soon implement our upgrade from Poise to the Jenzabar ERP system. While we often face the fears, frustrations, or concerns that change brings, it is also a time of “new beginnings.” We will face our upcoming transitions at SouthArk with courage, and we will flourish and grow together.

Spring Enrollment: The **OFFICIAL** final enrollment for the spring of 2014 is 1669; an increase of 0.1% from last spring and 2% increase from last fall (1632). The fall to spring semester credit hour (SSCH) production increased by 3.6%. We are trending similar to other community colleges in the state and nation. Thank you to all involved in the admissions/registration/advising process – recruiters, advisors, faculty and staff. The increase from the fall and previous spring was due, in large measure, to the concerted efforts of Student Services staff and faculty, who worked diligently to contact and encourage students to enroll for the spring semester.

Campus Conversations: We enjoyed some good discussions at the Student Forum last week. We have scheduled Campus Conversations for faculty and staff on East and West Campuses this month. I hope you find these session informative and helpful. These discussions have resulted in maintenance and repairs on both campuses, changes in committee reporting structure, modifications of policies, procedure development for student issues, improved communication, and more informed faculty and staff. As you can see, your input and feedback are invaluable. We do not have a specific topic for the meetings, but will give updates on college projects. The schedule for upcoming Campus Conversations:

West Campus: March 7 (8:30A – ECC - Cypress and Oak Breakout rooms)

East Campus: March 14 (8:30 – Workforce Building, room 121)

Legislative issues: This year's legislative session is focused on the re-approval of the Private Option for healthcare. Which was passed on Tuesday (3/4). SouthArk's state appropriations were approved by the legislature for 2014-2015. We have received notification that we will receive \$59,000 in General Improvement Funds as designated by Representative Baine and Representative Shepherd. The funds will be used for projects at the Arboretum, and in the Automotive Services and Performing and Media Arts programs.

2014-2015 Budget Planning: The College is in the process of developing its 2014-15 educational and general operating budget. Departments/units are requested to submit a justification for new and/or additional funds and to align their request to a strategic initiative. Budget hearings with departments will start March 10, 2014. In addition, we will continue to seek various sources of external funding to “fill the gap” of state appropriations.

Higher Learning Commission: SouthArk is gearing up for its 2016-2017 Higher Learning Commission (HLC) re-accreditation. The college will be re-accredited under the new Open Pathways model which includes a campus-wide quality initiative, filing of an assurance argument, and a site visit. The quality initiative proposal, *Learning to Think and Thinking to Learn*, was recently approved and is already underway. While everyone on campus will have some role in the accreditation process, those individuals who will be actively involved in evidence collection and writing will be notified later this month. Official kick-off for the assurance argument will begin in August of 2014.

Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnership: Unleashing Potential (RAMP:UP) grant: To meet the needs of local employers and industries, under our new TAACCCT grant, SouthArk and six other community colleges will be offering new Industrial Technology (Mechatronics) programs, as well as a new Advanced Welding program option. While students are completing coursework for these programs, they will also be able to earn nationally-recognized credentials, such as NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research), MSSC (Manufacturing Skills Standards Council) or AWS (Advanced Welding Society). These valuable credentials can be a first step to a good-paying local job, and the first rung on the ladder of success for students who have the desire to improve their skills in crafts such as welding, electricity, and hydraulics. Faculty positions in Electronics/Mechanical, Welding, Industrial Safety, and Process Technology are being advertised and we hope to be fill them in the next few months.

Academic Affairs updates:

- The SouthArk Board of Trustees approved the Stepping Stones program to become operationalized in February. This pilot program, made possible through generous grants from Murphy Oil and the Murphy Foundation, was launched in 2011. The Stepping Stones program is designed for individuals who have Intellectual Disabilities (ID) or Developmental Disabilities (DD), and who can benefit from the community college experience. The mission of the Stepping Stones program is to empower individuals to live, learn, work, and participate in the social fabric of our community. The program is now seeking approval to become a Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) from the US Department of Education. CTPs are degree, certificate, or non-degree programs for students with intellectual disabilities. The ultimate goal of the Stepping Stones program is to allow students with DD/ID to have an inclusive college experience by attending classes, abiding by college rules and regulations, participating in college activities, clubs, and events, all while preparing for gainful employment after graduating from the program.
- Ten of the eleven Rad Tech graduates from the August 2013 class have taken the licensing exam and all have passed. The Rad Tech program has had a 100% pass rate for two years.
- The Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (ARC/STSA) reviewed and accepted the progress report submitted by the Surgical Technology program at South Arkansas Community College.
- We have received confirmation that all 11 Occupational Therapy Assistant graduates from the August 2013 class have passed the credentialing exam (COTA-Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant). The national pass rate average for COTAs is typically around 80%. All 11 graduates are employed and working as Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants.
- The Arkansas Division of Medical Services – Office of Long Term Care has reviewed, evaluated and approved SouthArk’s application for Nursing Assistant Training Program as meeting federal and state regulatory requirements until 1/17/2016.

Relay for Life: The SouthArk Relay for Life Team is joining the Union County Relay for Life effort and will participate in the Relay Night event at Parkers Chapel Athletic Field on Friday, April 25th. The SouthArk Team expects this year to be the most successful ever! Please contact Becky Riggs, Cynthia Reyna, Nel Reynolds or Val Cantu if you would like to volunteer.

Campus Projects: ~ working to make the campus environment, clean, safe, inviting, and conducive to learning!

- The Summit/Block parking lot project has been delayed since December. As soon as weather permits, work on the parking lot should resume. Once completed, we believe this will be a very nice parking lot (100 spaces) that will enhance our campus. We will landscape and provide adequate security lighting for our students and employees in this area.
- The Heritage Plaza construction should start soon as the College has its pre-construction conference scheduled with the contractor this week. This project will bring forth the long sought green space for this area of our campus.
- As you have heard, the College is in the process of purchasing the Economy Inn Motel and Restaurant. We are hopeful the managers of the Restaurant can relocate as we all appreciate the good home cooking that they serve. The College is working with the owners, allowing up to six months for their relocation. The immediate plans for this property is for overflow parking.
- The college purchased properties located at 421 and 429 West Wesson Street in November, 2012. One house will be renovated for a “learning laboratory” as a home setting for training health science and Stepping Stone students. The other house is ready for demolition. We are using the shop in the back of the property for maintenance and storage.
- The Physical Plant and the Fiscal Office personnel continue to work to remove obsolete and worn-out equipment throughout the campuses by obtaining approval from the State of Arkansas Office of Finance and Administration. Two loads of obsolete equipment were taken to Little Rock last month. They are working to clean up campus facilities and inventory.

Concurrent Enrollment: For several years, SouthArk has enjoyed a relationship with local high schools whereby the college provides courses for concurrent enrollment so that high school students can receive credit for taking college courses on their campuses. We are working with representatives from the El Dorado School District to expand current offerings, including all courses required for students to fulfill the requirements of the Certificate of General Studies by the time they graduate from high school.

Dress for Success with Less Fashion Show: In an effort to prepare students for career success, members of the Student Services staff hosted on February 17 a Dress for Success Fashion Show during the noon hour in the Bistro. Students from the business program modeled clothing from the Salvation Army Family Store, Goodwill, and the PBL Clothes Closet to demonstrate that you don't have to spend a lot to look great! Visualizing appropriate business attire helps students as they prepare for transition into the world of work. **Please consider donating your lightly used professional attire to PBL.**

Heritage Plaza: The SouthArk Foundation is in the last stages of fundraising for our Heritage Plaza project with just under \$200,000 left to be raised. Gifts from the community have topped \$650,000 toward an original goal of \$700,000; however, the construction bid came in approximately \$150,000 higher than anticipated, so fundraising continues. The South Arkansas Community College Foundation has also launched the *Buy a Brick ... Leave a Legacy* campaign for the Heritage Plaza. Bricks are available for a \$100 tax-deductible contribution. **Please consider donating a brick in memory or honor of someone.** Bricks may be inscribed with the name of the purchaser's choice. For more information, contact the Foundation at (870) 864-7106, or to purchase/contribute on-line, go to www.southark.edu/foundation.

Evening With the Stars: The SouthArk Foundation asks you to save the date for "An Evening with the Stars," an event to honor Friend of the College, William C. Howard, and Distinguished Alumni, Melissa Jerry and Greg Taylor. This gala event will take place on Friday, May 2 at 6:30 p.m. at the El Dorado Conference Center. For more information call the Foundation office.

As we move through life, work, and the many transitions both bring, I grow to appreciate more and more family, friends, and you – the wonderful, hard-working, and dedicated employees of SouthArk. Thank you for your caring and support for each other, our students, and our community. You truly make a difference in the lives of many.

Barbara

| SouthArk Coming Events | | | |
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| Date | Description | Location | Time |
| March 7 | Campus Conversations | West Campus | 8:30 a.m. |
| March 13 | SouthArk Students in Recital | ECC Atrium | 12:00 p.m. |
| March 14 | Campus Conversations | East Campus | 8:30 a.m. |
| March 15 | SouthArk Upward Bound Gospel Fest | Murphy 1&2 | 6:00 p.m. |
| March 18 | Board Meeting | Adm. Board Rm | 3:45 p.m. |
| March 20 | SouthArk Spring Fling | ECC South Lawn | 11:00 a.m. |
| March 24-28 | Spring Break | | |
| March 28 | School Closed | | |
| March 26 | Foundation Board Meeting | ECC breakout room | Noon |
| April 1 | Invisible Wounds/SouthArk College, The Veterans Adm., Project South | ECC breakout rooms | 5:30 p.m. |
| April 4 | SouthArk Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society | Murphy Hall 1 | 6:00 p.m. |
| April 15 | Board Meeting | East Campus | 3:45 p.m. |
| April 17 | SouthArk Lecture Series (to be announced) | Murphy Hall 1&2 | 7:00 p.m. |
| April 18 | Arboretum Board Meeting | TEC 229 | 8:00 a.m. |
| April 18 | SouthArk Student Recognition Ceremony | Murphy Hall 3 | 6:00 p.m. |
| April 24 | SouthArk Students in Recital | ECC Atrium | 11:00 a.m. |
| April 25 | Relay for Life | Parkers Chapel Athletic Field | |
| April 27 | SouthArk Writers Ink Awards | Murphy Hall 3 | 2:00 p.m. |

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| April 28 | SouthArk Certified Nurse Assistant Pinning | Murphy Hall 1 | 5:00 p.m. |
| May 2 | Evening with the STARS | ECC | 5:00 p.m. |
| May 8 | Employee Recognition Ceremony & Brunch | Murphy Hall 1&2 | 10:30 a.m. |
| May 9 | Spring Commencement | ECC | 7:00 p.m. |