



January 3, 2011

"What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from."  
~T.S. Eliot~

Welcome back to a new year – 2011! While 2010 has ended – a year full of many exciting events in the life of the college - this year promises to bring many new beginnings for SouthArk. The new conference center, student center, café, bookstore, and Health Science Center will be opening within the next two months. The Student Services division will have a "one stop shop" for students. We will have a newly revived student organization – the Student Government Association. The Health and Natural Science faculty will be all located on the West Campus with all health science programs in one building. New programs are being developed and new services offered. Our Conference Center manager is busy booking college, community, and business events. The students, college, and community are excited about the progressive action of the college.

I know that you have many questions about the upcoming building completion dates and moving schedule. To the best of my ability at this time, this is what we know:

#### **Conference and Student Center:**

- The building is slated to be completed by the contractors on January 14<sup>th</sup>. AV/media contractors and our IT staff will be installing equipment January 18-26<sup>th</sup>. Internal and external signage will also be installed during this time. A committee is involved in selecting photography and artwork for the building.
- The move into this building is scheduled for Thursday, January 27-Saturday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. The Enrollment Services and Financial Aid offices will offer only limited service in the Administration building on Friday (1/28). **If all goes as planned**, they will reopen on Monday (1/31) in the new Student Center.
- The food service vendor for the café and conference center catering will be Valley Foods. SouthArk has been working with Valley staff for the past 4 months to develop the contract and determine the kitchen equipment. Ginny is working with Valley on menus. Valley will be interviewing for a chef/manager in the next two weeks. They anticipate opening the café for business by mid-March.
- A committee has been appointed to make plans for the Dedication/Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Conference and Student Center. The ceremony is scheduled for Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 10AM. Governor Beebe is scheduled to attend. The event will be open to the public. Our staff will serve as guides for citizens interested in tours throughout the day. A small private reception will be held on Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Health Science Center:**

- The Health Science Center is slated to be completed by January 28<sup>th</sup>. IT staff is already working in the building, installing lines.
- The move into the HSC is scheduled for Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> – Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup>. There is a possibility that this will be changed to the following week. We are waiting to hear back from architects/contractors. Again, **if all goes as planned**, we will begin the Health Science program classes in the new HSC on Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. We will keep you posted.
- A committee to plan a Dedication/Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Health Science Center is in the process of being appointed. Cynthia Reyna and Dr. George Roberts are co-chairing this planning committee. We anticipate the ceremony to be scheduled in April, with more details forthcoming.

**Whitfield Classroom Building:** We have begun discussions with the architects concerning the renovation of the Whitfield building. Once the Health Science faculty and staff vacate Whitfield, inventory of all offices and classrooms will take place. No classes will be assigned to areas vacated such that renovations may begin on the first floor in the spring. Mary Pat Cook's education classroom will be moved to the second floor at some point during the semester. This will be determined once plans are finalized and bids for renovations received. **PLEASE DO NOT MOVE ANY FURNITURE or EQUIPMENT** from these vacated spaces.

**Administration Building:** The Enrollment Services and Financial Aid offices will be freshened up by our maintenance staff. Heath Waldrop and Charley Hankins will move to the Enrollment Services area; Cynthia Reyna and Janis Givens will move into the Financial Aid area once clean-up is complete. We plan for this to be done in February.

**Workforce Building:** The space vacated in the Workforce Building will be reserved for the developing Process Technology program and for community/corporate training.

**Technology Building:** The IT staff will be taking over the testing area space for computer repair, set-up, and maintenance. Our maintenance staff will build a wall to enclose this space. The Learning Center space will become an area for Upward Bound students and staff. Again, once maintenance and institutional services staff have an opportunity to clean and freshen up this space, the move of the staff will occur.

**Legislative session:** The 88<sup>th</sup> Arkansas Legislative Session will begin in January. All Presidents and Chancellors will be meeting in Little Rock every other Monday during the session. I will be called to be in attendance at other times throughout the session. Preliminary reports indicate that there are many bills related to different aspects of higher education to be filed. The issues to be addressed include college completion, remediation, concurrent credit, performance funding, funding formulas, lottery scholarship, and more. We will try to keep you posted on the progress of various bills.

**Communication Task Force Report:** In August an ad hoc task force was formed to review the internal communication methods and policies on campus. The group also examined how the campus facilities “communicate” to the SouthArk team, students and guests. After compiling feedback from each of the college’s divisions, the task force identified common themes and made recommendations based on this feedback. Recommendations were made concerning committee structure, the use of technology, campus facilities, miscellaneous information sharing, and the development of an employee community forum. The recommendations were presented to the ELT in December and they have been forwarded to the appropriate Vice President or Dean for review and action. The report will be presented at the employee convocation.

**College Completion Agenda:** South Arkansas Community College is poised to answer the call to action and advance the “Community College Completion Challenge” by increasing the number of students who complete associate degrees, certificates, and other credentials to move into the workplace. Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society is heading the Community College Completion Corps, which is a student-led initiative to raise awareness of the importance of college completion not only for students but for colleges and the communities they serve. This challenge will engage our faculty, staff and board of trustees as well as other county and state government officials. It is crucial that we work together and mobilize our message stressing the importance of college completion. Working together, we can reach out to our learning community and turn the educational tide in favor of college completion. You will hear more about the action plan and how you can get more involved in the upcoming weeks.

We have many exciting events and changes on the horizon for students, faculty, staff, and our community this spring. But, as Arnold Bennett stated, “Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts.” SouthArk faculty and staff are known for their positive spirit, helpfulness, nimbleness, and flexibility. So, please remain positive, helpful, and flexible as we work through this transition period.

Have a good semester!

Barbara