



August 31, 2010

**Excellence:** I am proud to work with the many dedicated faculty and staff of SouthArk. They all put much time and energy into providing excellent instruction, services, facilities, and grounds for our students and employees. An anonymous author wrote, *"Excellence can be obtained if you:...care more than others think is wise;...risk more than others think is safe;...dream more than others think is practical, and...expect more than others think is possible."* So, I encourage you to *care, risk, dream, and expect more*, as we continue to strive toward excellence at SouthArk.

**Fall In-service meetings:** Thanks to all who helped to plan and implement our fall in-service activities. It was a busy, but action- and information-packed week. Our Fall 2010 in-service was highlighted by an institutional assessment expert, Dr. Barbara H. Jones (from Mississippi), who presented valuable information on assessment to faculty and student services staff. Eric Plummer, Chief of Police, from the SAU system also presented an hour long segment on "Sexual Harassment, Assault, and Stalking." Information was shared on "What Can I Legally Tell People Who Call Me About My Students?" with a streaming video to be posted soon. The in-service week was concluded with department, division, and standing committee meetings.

**Fall Enrollment:** Preliminary enrollment for the Fall of 2010 remains stable, as compared to Fall 2009 enrollment (1776 students). We anticipate additional enrollment of some high school concurrent students this week. While our early numbers show that our enrollment is stable, our student semester credit hour (SSCH) production shows about a 6% increase over the SSCH from last fall. Official enrollment data will be available after the 11<sup>th</sup> class day. We are excited to have students enrolled at SouthArk from 26 different counties and 5 different states. Thanks again, for everyone's hard work welcoming new students to campus and class.

**CCSSE Report:** SouthArk participated in Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in spring 2010, with a random sample of approximately 400 SouthArk students selected to complete the survey. Students rated their **overall satisfaction** with their educational experience a **3.18** on a 1 to 4 scale with "4" being excellent. As noted in the CCSSE report, the CCSSE uses a set of five benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges: active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. These benchmarks allow colleges to gauge and monitor their performance in key areas, and to compare performance with other similar colleges. The results of the 2010 CCSSE were overall positive for SouthArk, with SouthArk exceeding the cohort colleges in each benchmark category. Notably, SouthArk ranked **6% higher on Student-Faculty Interaction** and **9% higher on Support for Learners** when compared to the other AR cohort colleges. While both of these areas had higher scores than the cohort average, the CCSSE also made us aware of an opportunity to provide more **Active and Collaborative Learning** activities, in particular, those which engage students in class discussions or in areas concerning differing politics, religious beliefs and personal values. Results of the survey will be available on the SouthArk website under **College Information - Institutional Research** within the week.

**Arkansas Challenge Scholarships (funded in part by the state lottery):** South Arkansas Community College had an increase in the Academic Challenge Scholarships funded this year. To date, SouthArk has been notified of 55 awardees in all three categories: 1) Traditional - 28; 2) Non-traditional – 18; 3) Current Achievers – 4; and 4) Returning Challenge – 5. We are still awaiting additional rosters. All scholarships, except for the Returning Challenge, are valued at \$1,250 per semester.

**Entrepreneurship initiatives:** SouthArk recognizes the importance of supporting community efforts to develop new businesses and industry in the region, and sees itself as having a leadership role in producing new entrepreneurs. The College is engaged in offering a credit Entrepreneurship Certificate and non-credit courses related to entrepreneurship. In addition, the region recognizes the need for support for entrepreneurs. College and community members are coming together to serve on an **Entrepreneurship Task Force**. Don Wales, Chamber CEO, and I will serve as co-chairs of the committee. Lynda Richardson is also a member. We look forward to working together with committee members to develop opportunities, provide support, and identify resources needed for existing or potential entrepreneurs in our area. If you have ideas, please send them our way.

**Outdoor Expo:** As many of you know, the 12th Annual Outdoor Expo will be held on Saturday, September 11 on the east campus. Featured headliners are Bassmaster Pro, Lucy Mize, a 4-time national award-winning angler and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Steve "Wildman" Wilson. Guests will be able to enter their admission ticket for a drawing to win a fishing trip with Lucy. The rib cooking competition has over 20 rib cookers, so you will need to purchase your rib dinner tickets as soon as possible, as orders are limited. There will also be demonstrations and fun activities for children. For a full listing of Outdoor Expo activities: [www.Southark.edu/expo](http://www.Southark.edu/expo). We could not hold such an event without the involvement of many dedicated volunteers. Our SouthArk Foundation Board members, as well as over 80 faculty and staff, as well as numerous students, are involved in the event. We appreciate the giving of your time and energy which will benefit our students through funds raised for SouthArk scholarships and student organizations. It is a fun day for all, so we hope you will join us as a volunteer or participant.

All for now – hope you have a good week!

*Barbara R. Jones*