



News Release

College of the Ouachitas Recognized as a Leader in the National Student Completion Movement

Achieving the Dream Designates 14 New Leader Colleges for Accomplishments on Key Student Achievement Indicators

Malvern, AR (November 13, 2012) – College of the Ouachitas was recognized as a leader in the national student completion movement by Achieving the Dream, a national nonprofit leading the nation’s most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for community college student success and completion. College of the Ouachitas, one of 14 institutions designated as a 2012 Leader College, was recognized for demonstrating sustained improvement and accomplishments on key student achievement indicators, including student persistence and completion. The 14 new Leader Colleges are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Bay de Noc Community College</u> (Escanaba, MI)• <u>Central Piedmont Community College</u> (Charlotte, NC)• <u>Community College of Baltimore County</u> (Baltimore, MD)• <u>College of the Ouachitas</u> (Malvern, AR)• <u>Davidson County Community College</u> (Thomasville, NC)• <u>Elgin Community College</u> (Elgin, IL)• <u>Greenville Technical College</u> (Greenville, SC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Lone Star College System</u> (The Woodlands, TX)• <u>National Park Community College</u> (Hot Springs, AR)• <u>Springfield Technical Community College</u> (Springfield, MA)• <u>Temple College</u> (Temple, TX)• <u>Texarkana College</u> (Texarkana, TX)• <u>Trident Technical College</u> (North Charleston, SC)• <u>University of Hawai’i Community Colleges</u> (Honolulu, HI)*
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“Student success and completion are primary to our mission at College of the Ouachitas,” President Stephen Schoonmaker stated. “Our selection as a Leader College for Achieving the Dream and as one of the top ten finalists for the 2013 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence clearly demonstrate that College of the Ouachitas is indeed achieving success with our students in exciting and innovative ways.”

Leader Colleges are demonstrating the power of the [Achieving the Dream Student-Centered Model of Institutional Improvement](#) by raising persistence and graduation rates and closing achievement gaps. Each college approaches the work differently, but with the guidance of the model and Achieving the Dream Coaches, colleges implement data-informed programs

and policies that build long-term, institution-wide commitment to student success. Examples include: college readiness programs, mandatory new student orientation, student success courses, developmental course redesign, curriculum redesign, and intensive and individualized advising.

“We are proud of College of the Ouachitas for earning this respected distinction,” said Rachel Singer, Achieving the Dream Vice President for Community College Relations and Applied Research. “College of the Ouachitas has raised the bar on promising practices that will impact policies to help more students succeed. They deserve recognition for their dedication to the student success movement.”

In order to be eligible for Leader College distinction, colleges must demonstrate commitment to and progress on the principles and values of Achieving the Dream: committed leadership, use of evidence to improve programs and services, broad engagement, and systemic institutional improvement all guided by a student-centered vision focused on equity and excellence. Additionally, each Leader College has successfully implemented at least one student success intervention that is advancing student outcomes.

These colleges have identified workable solutions to issues such as enhancing the experience of first-year students, improving developmental education, closing achievement gaps, strengthening academic and personal advising for students in need of additional support, strengthening links to high schools and four-year institutions to strengthen student preparation and advancement, and increasing retention, persistence rates, and the number of certificate and degree recipients. To learn more about Leader Colleges, visit www.achievingthedream.org/get_involved/leader_colleges.

Achieving the Dream, Inc.

Achieving the Dream, Inc. is a national nonprofit that is dedicated to helping more community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color, stay in school and earn a college certificate or degree. Evidence-based, student-centered, and built on the values of equity and excellence, Achieving the Dream is closing achievement gaps and accelerating student success nationwide by: 1) guiding evidence-based institutional improvement, 2) leading policy change, 3) generating knowledge, and 4) engaging the public. Conceived as an initiative in 2004 by Lumina Foundation and seven founding partner organizations, today, Achieving the Dream is leading the most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for student success and completion in higher education history. With nearly 200 colleges, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams - working throughout 32 states and the District of Columbia – the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network helps 3.75 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams. To learn more, visit www.AchievingtheDream.org.

College of the Ouachitas

College of the Ouachitas is a public, comprehensive, community-based, two-year institution of higher education that serves a rural, five-county service area (approximate population of 174,000, approximate median income of \$33,400). The College provides high quality, accessible educational opportunities at the freshman and sophomore level in associate degree, technical certificate, and certificate of proficiency programs, a college-transfer program, continuing education, and industry-specific training to support individual and community needs in Arkansas. The College’s primary goals are to enable individuals to develop to their fullest

potential and to support the economic development of the state. As directed by its mission, the College “continually identifies and addresses the changing learning needs of the communities it serves.” Annual enrollments include over 2,000 credit and 4,000 non-credit students. To learn more, visit www.COTO.edu.