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Ouachita welcomes third largest incoming class in 15 years

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OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita welcomes third largest incoming class in 15 years

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

September 14, 2015

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Marking Ouachita Baptist University's third largest group of new students in the past 15 years, including 31 Governor's Distinguished Scholars, Ouachita welcomed a total of 1,531 students to classes this fall.

The 2015 fall semester total marks the sixth consecutive year the university's total fall enrollment has exceeded 1,500 students. Over the past three years, total new student enrollment has increased 12.5 percent, from 422 in 2012 to 475 this fall.

While the university's residential on-campus enrollment is down slightly from last year, declining from 1,457 to 1,438, enrollment growth in other programs provided an overall increase from 1,501 students a year ago to 1,531 this year – a 2 percent enrollment gain.

In addition to residential enrollment on Ouachita's Arkadelphia campus, the total includes 29 students in the off-campus Ouachita at New Life Church Associate of Arts program in Conway, 46 students in other off-campus classes and 18 students in the university's new Ouachita Online program that was launched in January.

The new class of Governor's Distinguished Scholars brings the total number of Governor's Scholars on campus to 83. To qualify, recipients must have an ACT score of 32 or higher and a grade point average of 3.5 or higher. Among this year's 31 incoming Governor's Distinguished Scholars, seven are enrolled in Ouachita's new Biomedical Scholars Program, an accelerated three-year degree program in the Patterson School of Natural Sciences that includes clinical shadowing, experimental research, study abroad, community service and mentoring.

Additionally, a concurrent enrollment pilot project with Baptist Preparatory School in Little Rock and Shiloh Christian School in Springdale includes 35 high school students enrolled in college-level courses in partnership with Ouachita. Combined with the university's other programs, the total student headcount for the fall semester is 1,566.

"We are pleased to see an overall increase in total enrollment for the fall semester," said Dr. Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs. "For the first time, these fall figures include students enrolled in our online degree programs and in a new pilot program offering concurrent credit with selected Christian high schools. Such new programs and new modes of delivery are an increasingly important way for Ouachita to expand its influence beyond our Arkadelphia campus.

"With a significant increase in the number of Governor's Distinguished Scholars, our freshman class promises to be among the most accomplished in Ouachita's history," Dr. Poole added. "We believe our commitment to outstanding academic programs offered in a Christ-centered learning community continues to attract some of the finest students in the region."

As students began fall classes, the university community gathered in Jones Performing Arts Center for Ouachita's annual Convocation Chapel.

Affirming that the students “are a chosen few for this time,” Dr. Charles Wright, Ouachita’s interim president, declared, “You have the opportunity to make a difference. You have the opportunity to change this world if you really want to.

“You possess the intellect, the creativity, the talent, the potential,” he added. “You are great students, great performers, great athletes. You have fantastic and persuasive personalities. You can make a difference.

“God has given you what it takes,” Dr. Wright said. “Are you up to the challenge? If you are, this will change your life.”

Ouachita Baptist University, a leading liberal arts university, is ranked nationally among America’s top colleges by *U.S. News & World Report* and *Forbes* magazines. Founded in Arkadelphia in 1886, Ouachita seeks to foster a love of God and a love of learning in a Christ-centered learning community.

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