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For immediate release

Ouachita is first university in Arkansas to earn Gold Status credential from American College of Sports Medicine

By Rachel Moreno

July 29, 2019

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University recently became the first university in Arkansas to earn a Gold Status credential from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) for its participation and excellence in the organization's Exercise is Medicine® (EIM) program. This marks the third time Ouachita's program has been recognized by ACSM, following two Silver Status recognitions in 2018 and 2016.

The Exercise is Medicine program is a global initiative of ACSM that promotes wellness education as well as including physical activity and evidence-based exercise programs in medical treatment. Ouachita's program is managed by the Department of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies.

Dr. Terry DeWitt, professor of kinesiology and leisure studies, attended ACSM's annual meeting in Orlando earlier this summer to accept Ouachita's award. Dr. Amber Chelette, assistant professor of kinesiology and leisure studies, also attended the event.

"Being recognized as a leader in health and exercise promotion in regards to preventative medicine is critical to our success as a campus and global leaders," DeWitt said.

"Ouachita is also the only ACSM Gold Status university in the state of Arkansas," he added. "I think this says a lot about what our kinesiology and leisure studies faculty have accomplished in the past five years."

ACSM launched its Exercise is Medicine recognition program in 2014 to honor campuses for their participation and engagement in living a healthy lifestyle. Universities are able to earn gold, silver or bronze status based on their involvement and commitment to health.

In 2016, Ouachita was one of only 15 universities in the nation to achieve Silver Status, and has since continued to implement and improve its wellness program both on- and off-campus.

The Department of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies hosts a community outreach event in the fall during a home basketball or volleyball game to promote a healthy lifestyle. Community participants have the

opportunity to visit stations and learn about exercise and diet or to take a brief health assessment. Ouachita also partners with a local elementary school to offer an organized recess to second and third graders.

Another step Ouachita has taken to promote wellness education and exercise in the Arkadelphia community is communicating with local healthcare providers, inviting them to send some of their obese patients who are experiencing health issues to the department's community outreach lab.

"What we are doing is incorporating real people with real problems in the real world – some on campus, some off – into our wellness program," DeWitt said in a previous interview.

In addition to the national recognition from ACSM, Ouachita recently secured a mini-grant of \$1,000 from Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield's Blue & You Foundation to support its campus program.

For more information, contact Dr. Terry DeWitt at dewittt@obu.edu or (870) 245-5264.

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