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For immediate release

Ouachita preparing to launch new engineering program

By Felley Lawson

December 7, 2021

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University is preparing to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering as early as Fall 2022, pending approval from the university's institutional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The new 4-year program is being designed to meet standards set by the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) and will be housed in the J.D. Patterson School of Natural Sciences at Ouachita.

A general engineering program provides solid preparation for graduates to move into any field of engineering, in addition to a wide range of related careers—some of which require additional training or graduate study—including robotics, renewable energies, computer science, healthcare, research and nanotechnology.

In order to become a licensed professional engineer, a student must graduate from an ABET-approved program.

“Ouachita has an outstanding physics program—a course of study fundamental to engineering—which helps explain why many of our physics and engineering physics graduates have become professional engineers,” said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita's president. “However, doing so required further education. Having our own undergraduate engineering program will allow our students to accelerate their progress toward becoming licensed professional engineers while enjoying all the other benefits of studying at Ouachita.”

The university is seeking approval of the proposed engineering curriculum from its faculty and Board of Trustees, approval of the degree program from HLC and approval for candidacy status from ABET. On-campus preparations for launching Ouachita's engineering degree program include creating a 4,400-square-foot engineering lab, hiring additional faculty members and developing the curriculum.

The university's goal is to complete the necessary preparations and approvals in time for the program to begin in the Fall 2022 semester.

Formal application for accreditation can be made to ABET when Ouachita's first engineering students graduate. Once granted, accreditation applies to all graduates who have completed the engineering curriculum within two years of ABET approval. Assuming a Fall 2022 launch, the first cohort of students in the program will finish in Spring 2026.

To learn more about Ouachita's new Bachelor of Science degree in engineering physics, contact Dr. Tim Knight at knightt@obu.edu or (870) 245-5528.

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