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Trennis Henderson

Ouachita Baptist University

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Ouachita to launch accelerated 3-year Biomedical Scholars Program in fall 2015



By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

November 19, 2014

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- For highly motivated students interested in pursuing health-related graduate programs following graduation, Ouachita Baptist University is introducing an accelerated three-year Biomedical Scholars Program.

The new program, available to incoming freshmen beginning in the fall of 2015, is the first of its kind in the region, according to Dr. Lori Hensley, Ouachita's J.D. Patterson Professor of Biology.

According to Hensley, the university's recent shift to 120-hour degree programs "makes a three-year degree much more possible."

"With much national attention on student debt and time to graduation," she added, "this program allows us to offer a meaningful degree that is packed with experiential learning while saving the student one year of time and tuition expenses."

Participants in the Biomedical Scholars Program will earn a Bachelor of Science degree in biomedical sciences with a minor in chemistry. Components of the high-intensity program include clinical shadowing,

experimental research, study abroad options, community service and mentoring designed to equip graduates for professional degree programs.

The competitive academic program will be limited to 10 incoming students per academic year. Application requirements include a 30 ACT or higher and at least six hours of transferrable college credit prior to admission as a Ouachita freshman.

“Six or more transferable hours accomplishes two things,” explained Dr. Tim Knight, dean of Ouachita’s Patterson School of Natural Sciences. “First, it has hopefully given the student a taste of college level course work as opposed to the typical high school. Second, bringing in two or more college level courses provides flexibility in scheduling, especially in the first year.”

“Having the six hours will allow students to earn the required 120 hours in the three-year period while still allowing time to study abroad and complete summer research,” Hensley added. “Additionally, we are really looking for the kind of student who has thought ahead, is preparing for college and is already demonstrating that they are highly motivated and capable of more than the average high school student.”

Knight said practical benefits of the program include “immediate immersion in shadowing experience as well as research-based courses and labs.” He noted that students in most programs don’t have those opportunities until their sophomore or junior years.

Hensley said additional benefits for students are that “they can start the professional program of their choice a full year earlier, and they save a full year of tuition.”

The Biomedical Scholars Program “is not for everyone,” Knight acknowledged. He said it is specifically designed “for those students who are really focused and have a firm desire to pursue professional school after their undergraduate experience.”

“We believe that students who are exposed to the experiential opportunities in this program will make better healthcare professionals,” Hensley concluded. “Students should consider this program if they are high-achieving and can’t wait to get on to the career of their dreams. We can help them get there faster and with a more impressive application.”

For more information about Ouachita’s Biomedical Scholars Program or the application process, contact Dr. Lori Hensley, chair of the biology department, at hensleyl@obu.edu or 870-245-5529 or visit www.obu.edu/biology/biomed.