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## **New Life Church and Ouachita partner to launch new degree program in Conway**



*By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications*

June 02, 2014

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- New Life Church in Conway will host a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, June 10, at 1 p.m. to celebrate a new educational partnership between NLC and Ouachita Baptist University.

OBU at NLC will offer Associate of Arts degrees in general studies and Christian ministry with in-depth opportunities for students to serve with and be mentored by NLC pastoral staff in hands-on ministry experience. Eleven students already are pre-registered for OBU at NLC's inaugural semester which will begin Aug. 26.

The partnership was approved by Ouachita's Board of Trustees in December 2013. Since that time, the Higher Learning Commission has approved Ouachita's request to offer associate degrees and approved the university's application to offer degree programs at an off-campus location. Dr. Stan Poole, Ouachita's vice president for academic affairs, said a confirmation visit from the HLC will be held within the first six months of the program's operation.

The resolution adopted by university trustees affirms that Ouachita and New Life "share a vision for equipping the next generation of Christian leaders with a quality education and passion for Christ's work in the world."

The resolution adds that the new degree programs "will provide a high-quality, relational and ministry-focused Christian education that is both nonresidential and highly affordable."

"Equipping the next generation of church leaders with a Christian education has been part of the NLC vision from the beginning," said Rick Bezet, lead pastor of New Life Church. "We are honored to be partnering with such a prestigious institution to make that vision a reality."

Ouachita President Rex Horne noted, "It is my hope and expectation that the endeavor with NLC will see more students experience the difference of a Ouachita education."

Dr. Brandon O'Brien, a 2004 Ouachita alumnus, is coordinating the work of OBU at NLC. "We are grateful for the high caliber students the program has already attracted," he said. "Our admitted students have excelled academically in their previous studies and have demonstrated a commitment to ministry in the local church.

"This program offers a unique opportunity in the city of colleges: a chance to receive a world-class Christian education in the context of a life-giving local church," O'Brien added.

The June 10 dedication ceremony, which is open to the public, will feature remarks by Bezet, Poole and O'Brien. The 7,000-square-foot facility to be dedicated is being remodeled specifically for OBU at NLC classes and administrative offices. It is located on the Conway campus of New Life Church at 633 South Country Club in Conway. A second phase to construct a permanent facility on the Conway NLC campus currently is in the planning stages.

For more information about the dedication service, contact Abbey Ichter at 501-328-5433 or [aichter@newlifechurch.tv](mailto:aichter@newlifechurch.tv). For additional information about OBU at NLC, visit [www.obu.edu/nlc](http://www.obu.edu/nlc) or contact Brandon O'Brien at 501-328-5433 or [bobrien@newlifechurch.tv](mailto:bobrien@newlifechurch.tv) or OBU Registrar Judy Jones at 870-245-5580 or [jonesj@obu.edu](mailto:jonesj@obu.edu).