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### Staff Profile: Rob Hewell, director of Online Learning Initiatives & professor of music

Jon Merryman

Office of Communications & Marketing

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*Lead photo by Tyler Rosenthal*

For immediate release

**Staff Profile: Rob Hewell, director of Online Learning Initiatives & professor of music**

*By Jon Merryman*

March 09, 2021

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at [comm-mark@obu.edu](mailto:comm-mark@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5206.

While many of us were home in March learning to bake homemade bread or binging Netflix, Dr. Rob Hewell was working swiftly with IT Services and other campus partners to shift every Ouachita student to remote learning. Hewell thrived not only assisting current students but also faculty and staff with moving courses to Zoom and Moodle while continuing his typical daily work with students in Ouachita's online degree programs.

"I think there is a silver lining to this dark cloud we've been living under in this season, and that is that our residential faculty have had the opportunity and need to rethink how they do what they do and realize there are resources they didn't know about that can help students learn," Hewell shared. "I love serving at Ouachita and working with fantastic colleagues and students. Online education is here to stay, and I love being able to help faculty and students succeed online."

"The last seven weeks of the semester could have been disastrous, but Dr. Hewell stepped up to offer the resources, training and assistance faculty needed to manage such a massive disruption to their plans," said Dr. Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs. "Dr. Hewell's knowledge and competence – and especially his heart for service – couldn't have been more timely or more deeply appreciated by those who benefitted from his expertise."

Part of what has made Hewell the perfect person to lead Ouachita's online education component is his love of a challenge, having taken on many new opportunities throughout his career. After over a decade

in church music ministry and eight years with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, he joined Ouachita's faculty in 2001 as chair of the Department of Church Music (later Worship Arts). With the launch of Ouachita Online in 2014, Dr. Hewell became an online course designer, then coordinator of online course development and later the director of Ouachita Online.

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Rob Hewell

"I am committed to helping Ouachita be robust in how we help students who might never have the chance to come to Ouachita – particularly non-traditional students – attend and complete their degrees. Even if a student is never able to set foot on campus, I want to help them become a Ouachitonian and a Tiger for Life."

The newest degree offerings through Ouachita Online are degree completion programs in interdisciplinary studies and organizational leadership, as well as an RN-to-BSN completer program. Additionally, the new M.S. degree in applied behavior analysis is a low-residency program, with all but one week of the program completed online.

"It's been wonderful to help people realize their goal of completing their Ouachita degree," Hewell said. "Dr. Hewell is a perfect reflection of what Ouachita is all about," said Bryant Adams, a 2020 alumnus who completed his degree online over 20 years after starting in person as a freshman. "He is kind and caring toward his students while seeking to encourage and empower them to achieve their goals. In my experience, during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, he was a vital leader standing up for remote learning for the entire Ouachita community while still effectively teaching and shaping his students in the degree completion program."

If you are considering finishing a degree you started, Hewell suggests reaching out for a free preliminary transcript review. See obu.edu/online for the current online degree offerings.

"It's completely free – I'll take a look at how many courses and how many hours you have left to complete a degree," he said. "If it works for you now, that's great! If not, we'll be here when you're ready."