Arkansas has been awarded $1 million to fund efforts to increase college completion. The grant, financed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is part of Complete College America’s Completion Innovation Challenge.

Thirty-three states competed for 10 grants. As a winning state, Arkansas will have 18 months to implement innovative, high-impact, college-completion initiatives to enhance student success and close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations.

ADHE will lead Arkansas’ involvement in the Completion Innovation Challenge, working to transform remediation and accelerate some certificate-and-degree programs. Participating institutions in the Challenge include Arkansas State University-Beebe, Arkansas Northeastern College in Blytheville, North Arkansas College in Harrison, Southern Arkansas University-Tech in East Camden, Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, University of Arkansas-Little Rock, University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff and the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

Explore detailed summaries of the 10 states’ (Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia) winning proposals
http://www.completecollege.org/path_forward/innovation_challenge/

Get Involved in the Graduate Student Association!

The Graduate Student Association includes every graduate student who is currently enrolled at UALR. The Association represents the ideas, issues, and needs of the graduate students and works together to institute change to improve the life-style and graduate experience of the students who attend UALR.

The GSA is having an informational meeting on December 6th in DSC Ledbetter Room A from 3:00-5:00pm. The agenda includes speakers from the UALR graduate school, upcoming events, and a chance to sign up for the GSA council. Everyone is invited and there will be prizes and free food for those who attend.

If you are interested or would like to attend please RSVP to MrCox2@ualr.edu
Finishing a BIG Academic Project

The end of the semester is just a couple of weeks away, and while some have already registered for Spring 2012 courses, a select few are graduating. First of all, congratulations, but I also have a question—How are you celebrating? A blog post from the Chronicle of Higher Education compares graduation to a wedding. Something that took a lot of time to plan, and when it was over, there was a possibility of post project depression. While the blog post was interesting, it was the comment section that was a real learning experience. http://chronicle.com/blogs/brainstorm/how-did-you-celebrate-completing-your-dissertation/22156

So how did respondents celebrate? lauracbird celebrated with decongestants rather than champagne since she had the worst cold of her life after finishing. Illness seemed to be a common theme, along other stress inducing activities like moving or starting a new job. For those of us still looking forward to graduation, maybe now is the time to plan the celebration whether it’s a well timed thank you to the makers of Mountain Dew or the purchase of a new kayak. For our newest graduates this semester, put away the caffeine and relax.

Doctoral Qualifying Exams—Spring 2012

The Orientation meeting for the HIED Spring, 2012 Doctoral Qualifying Examinations will be held on Friday, December 2 from 3-5pm in Dickinson Hall, Room 408.

If you're planning to sit for Qualifying Exams in the Spring (scheduled for Saturday, February 11 from 1-5pm, Friday, February 17 from 1-5pm, and Saturday, February 18 during 9am-12noon and 1-4pm, location TBA), or if you'd like to gain insights into the process for a future exam administration, it is strongly recommended that you attend this meeting. It will address the scope, nature, and direction of the Written and Oral Qualifying Exams, and general expectations for student performance.

In order to sit for Quals in the Spring, you will need to submit both the 'Application for Qualifying Examination' form and "Appointment of Supervisory or Examining Committee' form for review and approval. Completed forms are due by 5pm, Friday, December 2. If you plan to attend the organizational meeting, it is most convenient for you to submit the forms at the meeting. After the meeting, information letters will be mailed to all students who have been approved to sit for Quals in February.

If you have questions about the Quals process, please attend the Orientation meeting. If you would like to receive a copy of the 2011-2012 Student Guide to Qualifying Exams, please e-mail Dr. Jim Vander Putten at jvpuppen@ualr.edu.
Influences on the commitment to and focus of community engagement at colleges and universities: a multiple-case study

Author: Melissa M. Hawkins

The primary research question that guided the study was: What influences a college’s or a university’s commitment to and focus of community engagement?

The study found that there are multiple influences on an institution’s commitment to and focus of community engagement. The student demographic and interests of the campus leader were found to play important roles in determining an institution’s commitment to and focus of community engagement. The importance of recognition of community engagement efforts by outside professional organizations did not seem to be an influence when determining how and why an institution engages in the community. Recognition by the community that a need was being met, as well as evidence of developing student awareness of community needs, seemed to have a stronger impact on how and why an institution engages in the community.

The comparative study juxtaposes community engagement in four very distinct institutions within the state of Arkansas. It is the first known qualitative study that examined community engagement from the perspective of campus leadership, faculty, staff and students from a diverse sample of institutions including historically Black, religiously affiliated, state supported, private, selective, open-enrollment, rural and urban. The researcher conducted both structured and semi-structured interviews with campus administrators, faculty, staff and students; observed community engagement activities; and, reviewed institutional materials to better understand the history, culture and mission of each institution as well as identify influences on the commitment to and focus of community engagement.

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Did you know?
The HIED faculty has an updated guide for HIED dissertations. Contact your advisor for a copy.

Conference Presentations


White, P. J., & Barrett, T. G. (2011). The decision to stay: A qualitative multiple-case study exploring college choice and persistence factors of second-year students at religiously affiliated institutions. Research Panel Presentation at the meeting of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), Toronto, Ontario, Canada.


Brad Patterson, Ed.D. student, accepted the position of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life Research, Evaluation, and Assessment at UALR.

Stan Ellis, Ed.D. student, presented his doctoral research at ASHE in Charlotte, NC. The title of the presentation was "The talented tenth revisited: Socialization and retention for black junior faculty at HBCUs." Stan co-presented with Dr. Jim Vander Putten and Dr. Amanda Nolen.

Dr. Jan Austin, Ed.D., received a promotion recently from Director of UALR's Office of Campus Life to UALR Assistant Vice-Chancellor, Student Life and Leadership Development.

Brittany Mathews, M.A. College Student Affairs, has accepted the position of Student Development Specialist in the Office of Campus Life at UALR. Dr. Patti Jo White, Ed.D. in Student Affairs Administration, 2009, accepted a position as Director of the Harding University North Little Rock Professional Center, and also became an Assistant Professor in the Harding University College of Education.

We are interested in your success! Please e-mail Willa Williams at wwilliams@ualr.edu with details about your new job, promotion, or conference presentations.

You can donate to the Campaign for the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Check out the website for details on how to donate to HIED at http://ualr.edu/campaign

AIR has posted dissertation grant proposals at www.airweb.org/grants, so has AERA http://www.aera.net/grantsprogram/. These funding opportunities can range from over $20,000 to the $300 grant from the Standing Committee for Multicultural Affairs (CMA) of the American College Personnel Association.

Keep on reading e-mails on GREENPEN for updates on new grants and do some searching at local, regional, and national grant sites and professional organizations.