New Alumni Director Welcomed

Lora Malone has been named the alumni director for Central's Alumni Relations Office. A native Oklahoman and Central alumna, Malone joins the university with more than 10 years of alumni relations experience. Most recently, Malone served as executive director of the University of Texas at Arlington Alumni Association, where she helped increase overall membership and actively engaged the Alumni Association Board in a variety of fundraising initiatives and events. Prior to that, she served for 10 years as the vice president and chief programs officer for the Oklahoma State University Alumni Association.

Students Invited to 2014 ‘Posters on the Hill’

Two computer science students from Central have been invited to present their research at the 18th annual “Posters on the Hill” in Washington, D.C., April 28-29, 2014. Since 1996, the Council on Undergraduate Research has hosted an annual undergraduate poster session on Capitol Hill to help members of Congress understand the importance of undergraduate research. Sean Smith, a senior, and Wenxi Zeng, a sophomore, will present their research on a 3D wheelchair simulation system that will allow children aged 2 to 5 years old with severe motor impairments to practice the fundamental skills required to safely control a joystick-operated wheelchair. Jicheng Fu, Ph.D., assistant professor of computer science at Central, served as their adviser. Sixty presenters were accepted from more than 600 applicants, and Central will be the only Oklahoma university in attendance.

UCO Joins Advisory Committee

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has invited Central to become a member of its Evidence for Learning Advisory Committee. The committee is examining best practices in higher education competency-based education to facilitate the exchange of ideas and jump-start implementation or continuation of best practices with incubator grants. Jeff King, Ed.D., executive director of Central’s Center for Excellence in Transformative Teaching and Learning, will serve as Central’s committee representative. His role in developing and implementing Central’s Student Transformative Learning Record initiative enables him to be a voice concerning innovative tools, training and processes in competency-based education. King will work with the advisory committee to advise the foundation about worthy ideas for incubation grants.
Operation Degree Completion a Finalist

Operation Degree Completion, an Oklahoma City metro area degree completion effort led by Central, has been recognized as a finalist in the Southern Association of College and University Business Officers’ “Best Practices” competition. Since its inception in 2009, Operation Degree Completion has become a national model for degree completion, generating more than 800 bachelor’s degrees, 300 associate’s degrees and 4,000 additional credit hours at Central.

A Top University for International Students

Central has again been recognized as a top institution of higher learning for international students, ranking 14th among all master’s level institutions in the U.S., according to the Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange. Central moved up one spot in the 2012-2013 rankings and remains the only university in Oklahoma to be ranked in the top 40 of the Open Doors Report. Central’s international students represent 86 countries and 8 percent of the university’s student body. They cite the university’s long history, small class sizes, quality faculty-student interaction and affordability as top reasons for selecting Central.

Certified Healthy Campus

Central has been named a Certified Healthy Campus for the third consecutive year, recognizing the university’s efforts to promote health and wellness among its students, faculty and staff. A part of the “Shape Your Future” campaign driven by the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Central was awarded the highest level of certification, garnering the excellence designation. The program recognizes college campuses and vocational technical schools that make a positive impact on the health of their employees and students. “We recognize that a healthy mind and body allows our students, faculty and staff to be their best. That’s why wellness is one of the six tenets of our transformative learning focus at Central,” said Mark Herrin, assistant vice president of wellness and sport.

Prospective Teacher Academy Grant

Central received a $20,000 grant from AT&T for the Prospective Teachers Academy, an initiative started by Central’s College of Education and Professional Studies to assist and prepare students in Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS) for college degrees and teacher certifications. The academy is a partnership with OKCPS that provides a “grow your own” framework for the district by identifying and developing high school sophomore, junior and senior students considering a career in teaching. Academy participants attend a series of cost-free workshops at Central, allowing them to develop mentoring relationships with Central faculty and staff, prepare for success as teacher education students in college and get information on scholarships. Central currently works with U.S. Grant, Capitol Hill and Southeast high schools and plans to expand to other Oklahoma City Public Schools high schools.