Awards Honor UCO Campus Improvements

UCO has received several recognitions for good management. For the second year in a row, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recognized Central for using more green power than any other school in its conference, naming it the 2011-12 Green Power Champion of the Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletics Association. Central receives 100 percent of its electricity from wind power.

In addition, University Business magazine and Higher One recognized UCO as a national Model of Efficiency for its innovative solution to a surplus of printers, so far saving the university $400,000. In addition, Central has been recognized as a Certified Healthy Campus, a program sponsored by the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma Turning Point Council, Oklahoma Academy of State Goals and the State Chamber.

New Degrees to Meet State Needs

Central is offering three new master’s degree programs — starting this fall, one in Human Communication and one in Public Administration, with a third, a Master of Science in Nursing, to start in January. The programs will offer classes during times conducive to those working full time, as well as traditional graduate students. The Human Communication degree program offers specialization in conflict management, relational dynamics, family communication, ministry, interpersonal communication training, intercultural and global competencies, and mediation. The Public Administration degree will emphasize areas such as city management, human resources, nonprofit leadership and international organizations. It’s intended to help future needs as nearly 50 percent of state employees will qualify for retirement in the next 10 years.

‘Upward Bound’ Gets $1.53 Million Grant

The U.S. Education Department’s Upward Bound program has awarded $1.53 million to UCO to continue the university’s outreach to metro-area high school students to help them prepare for college. The funds will be divided over the next five years for Central’s Upward Bound program, that serves low-income, first-generation and ethnically underrepresented students from Capitol Hill, Crooked Oak and Star Spencer high schools in the metro area. Counseling, tutoring, assisting in class selections, taking students on cultural outings and college-campus tours — all part of the services provided through both on-site activities at the schools as well as six-to-eight week residential summer sessions on the Central campus.
Top Scholarship Awarded for Korean Study

Central International Business major Matthew Esch will spend the fall 2012 semester studying in South Korea with the help of a highly competitive U.S. scholarship that promotes international study. He is one of 50 students nationwide receiving the maximum $8,000 scholarship through the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship program, sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the U.S. Department of State. Esch is a UCO junior from Coatesville, Penn., who will leave in August for Pukyong University where he will study Korean and international business. The Gilman scholarship committee lists Korean as one of 10 critical-need languages, awarding larger grants to students interested in studying that language.

Computer Classes to Help Veterans

To help Oklahoma veterans seeking employment, UCO’s Department of Computer Science is offering a series of free summer workshops to teach the basics of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Veterans may take one or all three sessions, instructor Dawn Holt said. No textbooks or other materials are required. During the sessions, Central’s Career Services office will make presentations about job skills, tips for a successful job search and resume formatting. The sessions are an extension of an earlier series of workshops that targeted area seniors. “We were looking for ways to serve the community and people who have served our country,” she said. The two-week sessions began June 11 with Word, followed by Excel starting June 25 and PowerPoint on July 9.

Endeavor Games, Record-Setting

Two Paralympic athletes set world records at the 13th UCO Endeavor Games, an early June event that attracted about 280 competitors. Jeremy Campbell broke his own world record, set earlier in the day, throwing the discus 63.46 meters. Campbell, a UCO resident athlete, is a below-the-knee amputee. The other world record was set by Angela Madsen of Long Beach, Calif., who scored 9.5 meters in the sitting shot put event. The four-day event attracted competitors from 36 states, Puerto Rico, Canada and the United Kingdom. More than 100 of the athletes were veterans or current military members. About 350 volunteers helped. Financial supporters included the OU Medicine Corporate Challenge, which raised $54,000 for the event, described by many as being inspirational.

UCO Grad, Research Earn National Honor

A paper, based on research started at UCO, has received the Stephen J. O’Brien Award from the American Genetic Association for the outstanding student-authored paper published in The Journal of Heredity in all of 2011. Lead author Justin Lack also received a $1,000 prize and expense-paid trip to the 2012 American Genetic Association meeting in July in North Carolina. Lack became involved in the research project as a student at UCO, where he received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees before moving to Oklahoma State University where he will study Korean and international business. The Gilman scholarship committee lists Korean as one of 10 critical-need languages, awarding larger grants to students interested in studying that language.

UCO, Mind Games Grand Champs 2011-12

The UCO Mind Games team in May became the Grand Champion of the 2011-12 Mind Games Tournament. The team of four defeated Southwestern Oklahoma State University 300-240 in the final match that aired on KSBT-TV channel 52. The UCO team earned $20,750 in scholarships sponsored by the Chickasaw Nation, to be divided among them equally. Altogether, 32 teams competed in the two-week season, which will return in September for a second year. UCO team members were Joseph Alliawi, an Electrical Systems Engineering major from Kampal, Uganda; Dan Beshear, an Actuarial Science major from McAlester; Sarah McKenzie, a Psychology major from Midwest City, and Kane Watkins, a Geography major from Edmond.

Financial Aid Increases 90 Percent

In a four-year span, Central achieved a 90 percent increase in financial aid, enabling the university to provide more to students trying to cover expenses. The amount of grant, scholarship and student employment aid went from about $27 million in 2006-07 to $51.2 million in 2010-11. While the number of grants declined from 6,926 to 6,651, the total dollars awarded increased 92 percent to $32.4 million. Scholarships increased from $2.5 million to $3.6 million with the number offered moving from 3,400 to 6,000. Student employment funds increased from $2.5 million to $3.6 million with student workers increasing from 971 to 1,338. During this same time period, student loans increased from $39.9 million to $62 million.

Debate Coach Takes Top Title

Central Debate Coach Matt Moore has been named the 2012 Dick Stine Coach of the Year, a nationally prestigious award given to junior-varsity or novice-level debate coaches. A former Central debate team member, Moore returned to his alma mater as coach in August 2011. The team, comprised of six Central freshmen and sophomores, travel to 12 tournaments a year. The team placed fifth at the 2012 National Junior Division Debate Tournament and 33rd at the 2012 Cross Examination Debate Association Tournament.

Spring Sports Garner Six National Invites

Central’s spring sports season finished with several national honors bringing excitement to the university. Central golf star Josh Creel was named the 2012 NCAA Division II National Individual Men’s Golf Champion in addition to earning the 2012 Arnold Palmer NCAA Division II Player of the Year title. Softball player Kacie Edwards made national headlines with her determination to play, then claimed the 2012 Daktronics Inc. NCAA Division II Player of the Year title. Central had six of its sports teams receive 2012 national tournament invitations. Playing in national competitions were UCO’s Softball, Men’s Golf, Women’s Golf, Women’s Rowing, Women’s Tennis and Field teams. Top-10 national finishes in four sports helped Central finish 32nd in the final 2011-12 Division II Learfield Sports Directors’ Cup Standings, the best showing by the Bronchos in more than a decade. UCO earned points in seven of the 14 sports used to determine the standings. It was Central’s best finish since ranking No. 22 in 1998-99. More than 300 institutions sponsor Division II athletics with 244 of them scoring points in the final standings. Central’s Bronchos competed as a Division II independent this year, will be a member of the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletic Association in 2012-13.