Non-Resident Spring Enrollment Up 15%

Central's spring 2012 enrollment of non-resident students is up 15%, or 1,207 vs. 1,049 a year ago. International students account for the majority of these enrollments, although there are a smaller number of out-of-state students included. Looking at undergraduate credit hours, non-residents are enrolled in 19,276 hours, up 16% over the 16,677 recorded last spring. For graduate work, non-residents are enrolled in 1,912 hours, up 4% over spring 2011's total of 1,841 credit hours. Looking at Central's international enrollment, students from China are the largest sector, or about 17%, followed by significant enrollments from Saudia Arabia, Korea and Nepal. About 100 countries and 47 states are represented by students on the UCO campus.

$1.5 Million Gift to Athletics, Largest Ever

The wife of former Central athletic standout Don Burget has given $1.5 million to UCO Athletics for a scholarship fund. It’s the largest single donation in the athletic program’s history. The funds will establish the Don and Shigeko Burget Athletic Scholarship Fund to support student athletes throughout the department. Shigeko Burget said her husband always credited much of his success to having a college degree, made possible by a scholarship. That inspired her to establish the scholarship fund. Don Burget, who had a successful career in Los Angeles real estate, died in 2011. While at Central, he excelled in football, basketball and track from 1951-54. He was inducted into the UCO Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998.

Fall Graduating Class at 1,172, New Record

UCO recently had its largest fall graduating class in university history — applications for 1,172 diplomas. For the last several years, the university has had fall graduation classes in the 1,100-range, with the last record set in December 2008 when 1,141 graduated. The College of Education and Professional Studies had the largest fall 2011 number, with students applying for 297 bachelor’s and 130 master’s degrees. Other numbers include the College of Business Administration, 281 bachelor’s and 34 master’s; College of Liberal Arts, 172 bachelor’s and 36 master’s; College of Mathematics and Science, 150 bachelor’s and one master’s; College of Fine Arts and Design, 44 bachelor’s and 12 master’s; and the Interdisciplinary Studies in Forensic Science with nine bachelor’s and six master’s.
Graduate Completes 40-Year Journey at Age 57

Mike Ryan, 57, recently made headlines for completing his degree at Central, finishing an educational journey he started 39 years ago at the College at Brockport in New York. The cabinetmaker for Edmond Public Schools always dreamed of completing his degree, but didn’t think he could juggle his schedule. Then he discovered Central’s night classes. While sometimes being the oldest person in a UCO class, even topping a few professors, he never felt out of place. “There was a great sense of community,” he said. The father of six and grandfather of eight was most pleased that his 80-year-old mother attended commencement — something she, too, had wanted for a long time.

Chancellor Presents Legislative Agenda at UCO

Chancellor Glen Johnson was on the UCO campus in December to outline why the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education is requesting $980 million for FY 2013, a 3.7% increase from 2012. Short version: Oklahoma’s higher education faces cost cutting at the same time it is experiencing record enrollment numbers, as well as increases in the number of students completing degree programs. “After three years of budget cuts, we continue to provide a top-quality educational product to our students at a very affordable cost as we produce an education workforce to meet the demand of our global marketplace,” he said in describing the Regents’ legislative agenda. Increasing financial aid will be a priority, he said.

UCO Gets First VP for Government Relations

Mark Kinders has joined UCO as its first vice president for government relations. He is a 36-year veteran of public higher education, having worked with UCO’s President Don Betz first at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UWRF), then at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah since 2008. A Marine veteran, Kinders also has a background in journalism with a bachelor’s degree from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University in Illinois, a master’s in history from UWRF, and a master’s of public affairs through the Executive Program at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. He is charged with making Central the most collaborative higher education institution in Oklahoma, while building partnerships in government and education.

New Football Coach, Dynamo Returns Home

UCO alumnus Nick Bobeck, 31, is Central’s new head football coach. From Beaver, Bobeck returns to UCO after four years as head coach at junior college powerhouse Navarro (Texas) College where he compiled a sensational 42-5 record. Navarro won the 2010 national championship along with three regular-season Southwest Junior College Football Conference (SWJCFC) titles. As a fullback for Central from 1999-02, Bobeck was a four-year letterman and two-year starter, earning first-team All-Lone Star Conference North Division honors as a senior. He then served as a graduate assistant coach the next three seasons, before joining Texas A&M as an offensive line coach in 2006, then going to Navarro in 2007.

Marketing Effort Hits Airport Concourse

As part of its new marketing effort, UCO installed in December promotional banners in the main concourse of the Will Rogers World Airport. University officials believe the high exposure will reinforce Central’s designation as Oklahoma’s only metropolitan university.