

Reach Higher Degree Completion Program Wins Award

03.05.2010

Oklahoma's Reach Higher degree completion program recently received the 2009 Distinguished Program Award from the Association for Continuing Higher Education.

Representatives of Reach Higher participating universities recently gathered as Chancellor Glen D. Johnson and State Regents Chair William Stuart Price accepted the award. Reach Higher is Oklahoma's innovative, flexible and affordable degree completion program for working adults who want to finish their degree from a state university.

Oklahoma's Reach Higher degree completion program recently received the 2009 Distinguished Program Award from the Association for Continuing Higher Education.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford/Sayre is one of eight universities participating in the Reach Higher program, Oklahoma's innovative, flexible and affordable degree completion program for working adults who want to finish their degree from a state university.

SWOSU faculty members Marci Grant, Rita Hays, Jim Long and Dr. Les Crall recently attended a meeting of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education where the award was presented to Oklahoma Higher Education Chancellor Glenn Johnson.

Reach Higher is a collaborative program provided by eight of Oklahoma's regional universities. The participating universities are SWOSU, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Cameron University, Langston University, Rogers State University, Northeastern State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University and University of Central Oklahoma. The universities create a statewide network of courses designed to enhance the working adult students' educational goals.

"In collaboration with businesses, we developed a program that gives those a second chance to complete their college degrees," Long said. "The results will move our state and economy forward."

Classes are provided online or in the evenings to best fit the needs of the student. Students may enroll at any time and classes are offered five different times throughout the year. Each session lasts eight weeks and the degree can be completed in as little as two years. The curriculum focuses on courses in management, business, communications, leadership, ethics and data analysis. Upon graduation, the students are awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership.

The curriculum was collaboratively developed by the faculty of the eight universities, and the program is approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Crall said a college degree is an asset to any working adult looking to increase their income, move up in an organization, or obtain a new job.

While other degree completion programs may have a high cost that working adults are unable to afford, Reach Higher's program is very affordable. Tuition for Oklahoma

residents is \$157.25 per credit hour. Out-of- state tuition is \$372.50 per credit hour. Book costs will vary by course.

Financial aid is available for students who qualify. Students should apply for federal aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The financial aid office at SWOSU can assist in applying. Adults who are interested should also talk to their employer about possible tuition reimbursement opportunities.

Students who are eligible for admission into the Reach Higher program have completed at least 72 hours of previous college course work, have a 2.0 GPA in all past course work and be at least 21 years of age. To apply for the program, prospective students should select a home institution, complete an application for admission to the program, and furnish the home institution with official transcripts from all previous colleges and universities. Once a student is approved for admission, the applicant will be notified in writing and assigned an advisor or contact person. The student should then complete an individual degree plan with the advisor at the home institution.

For more information on the program or to apply online, go to www.okhighered.org or call Bob Klaassen, SWOSU Registrar, at 580.774.3777.