



For Immediate Release
August 4, 2009

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Rhodes State Prepares for Degree Changes

LIMA, Ohio— Rhodes State College is preparing for changes on the horizon that will elevate its role in the area's educational attainment and economic recovery. "Today, in light of the economic downturn, we're facing an unprecedented demand for our degree programs and services. We're also seeing a renewed commitment on the part of national leaders to support our mission," said Debra McCurdy, Ph.D., President, Rhodes State College.

Just a few weeks ago, President Barack Obama outlined a plan to increase support to the nation's community colleges to help in rebuilding the capacity and competitiveness of America's workforce. His plan calls for an additional five million community college graduates by 2020, and the infusion of \$12 billion into the community college system over the next decade. He wants to increase the effectiveness and impact of community colleges, raise graduation rates, modernize facilities, and create new online learning opportunities.

"The marketplace is rapidly changing," explained McCurdy. "Jobs requiring at least an associate's degree are projected to grow while there will be fewer jobs that require no college experience. Community colleges will be vital in educating the workers of the future with the analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills they'll need. In the coming months, we will know more about President Obama's initiative and identified the opportunities for Rhodes State and the impact on the surrounding communities."

On the heels of the President Obama's announcement, Rhodes State unveiled two new degree programs which provide two years of credit towards a bachelor's degree. Rhodes State is now offering the Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees. These degrees easily transfer to a public four-year university and many private four-year institutions.

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“These new degree programs are a springboard to a bachelor’s degree at an extremely affordable cost,” said McCurdy. “They represent one of many steps that Rhodes State will be taking in the future to offer educational pathways to individuals who have been hard hit by the economic downturn.”

The AA degree prepares students for further study in liberal arts areas such as communication, English, history, psychology, sociology, pre-law and more. The AS degree prepares students for further study in areas such as business, biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, information technology, criminal justice, mathematics, pre-education, pre-medicine, and more.

Rhodes State also announced the appointment of Dr. Roberto Gutierrez as Vice President of Academic Affairs. Gutierrez, who hails from the state of Washington, brings to Rhodes State valuable executive experience from several two-year institutions. Gutierrez will be instrumental in providing strategic vision for the College’s academic programs. He received his doctor of education from Oregon State University, his master of education from Heritage University, and his bachelor of arts from Washington State University.

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