

**Vision 2025 Commission—November 2013 Meeting Review:**

- **Mr. Jason Hamilton, Executive Director, Arkansas Commitment.** He presented information on how this program improves the access of underrepresented teens to college, financial aid, and supports the development of life skills. Currently, the program assists a limited number of students, but there are plans to expand the program to include 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. Arkansas Commitment also fosters students' development of leadership skills, nurtures the concept of commitment to themselves, and promotes active participation in monthly community service projects. Mr. Hamilton concluded by stating his goal is to see the program replicated throughout the state.
- **Mr. Chad Brown, Director of Research, Circumference Group.** Mr. Brown presented information regarding the Harvard Club of Arkansas. The club encourages students to apply to Harvard. He also mentioned encouraging students to return to Arkansas after graduation and concluded by stating Harvard, Yale, and Princeton “aren't just places for geniuses,” but they are for anyone who wants to help their community.
- **Ms. Jerri Derlikowski, Director of Education Policy and Finance, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.** She restated the goal and scope of the Vision 2025 Commission and outlined the history of similar taskforces and committees from previous years. She also stated two roadblocks to changes in higher education: implementation and funding. In conclusion, Ms. Derlikowski encouraged Commission members to drum up support from their local communities and be ready to think up unique solutions to the challenges presented by higher education.
- The meeting emphasized that for students to take advantage of opportunities in higher education— all students need information and access available to them.
- The meeting concluded with suggestions on how Commission members can spread ideas to improve Arkansas' higher education system:
  - Commission members can locally discuss the Commission's initiatives with residents in their area;
  - Ask to be on a local meeting agenda to present the Commission's purpose and scope;
  - Put together a PowerPoint presentation Commission members can use to present to local communities;
  - Think about what Commission members can do to further the efforts to improve higher education in Arkansas;
  - Take a month to travel around the state to discuss the condition of higher education.