

## Vision 2025 Commission—September meeting synopsis:

- The Commission chair discussed the purpose, scope, and goals of Act 1082 of 2013 and Vision 2025, which is to have all voices, especially ones that are underrepresented, to be a part of the higher education conversations and solutions.
- A progress report from the Commission is due April 30, 2014 and a final report is due October 15, 2014. The sunset date for the Vision 2025 Commission is January 1, 2017, but may be extended past that date.
- Aims McGuinness, Senior Associate, National Center for Higher Education (NCHEMS) provided information on how Arkansas compares both nationally and regionally with other SREB states. He suggested ways the state can stay competitive. He gave the following suggestions for improvement:
  - grants provided for certifications beyond high school to identify skill sets
  - need for more money and targeted money in the system
  - driving points about higher education home to the general public
  - creating a culture of college success
  - Career Pathways program and the Career Coaches program
- Dave Spence, President, Southern Region Education Board (SREB), provided information regarding the state's ability to get students ready for higher education. He said more work is necessary to achieve the increase in degrees and credentials by 4-5% every year. He also reiterated the importance of achieving more middle degrees and certificates to the state's economy.
- The meeting concluded with suggestions of different topics or areas of concern the Commission could discuss. A few of note were:
  - Discussion on how the Task Force on Higher Education, Remediation, Retention, and Graduation Rates worked, and the results of subsequent legislation;
  - To hear about innovative strategies to get more students to completion;
  - A suggestion to attend a November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting in which several existing and new entities will address remediation in the state;
  - Discuss how to infuse funds into programs such as Career Coaches during the Fiscal Session;
  - Discuss ways to use 1-yr certificates as a way to grow per-capita income within the state by changing the two-year colleges funding formula; and
  - Review of needs-based scholarships and availability of all scholarships.