

New names for OTC announced

BY WAYNE BRYAN
Staff Writer

Would students rather attend Diamond State College or Riverpark College? How about the College of the Ouachitas?

Those three are the finalists for a new name for Ouachita Technical College in Malvern. College officials hope a new name for the school will overcome what they believe is an outdated image of the college and its students.

"For 20 years before it became a college, it was a vocational-technical school," said Barry Ballard, president of OTC. "The word 'technical' is killing us. People are thinking something different than we want them to think. We are not reaching those we want to reach."

Ouachita Tech still offers technical training in fields such as cosmetology, computers and auto repair. However, the school also offers associate degrees in nursing, education, business and criminal justice that can lead to degrees at the state's four-year colleges and universities.

Many students from the region also take general-studies courses and core-curriculum classes that transfer as credit toward four-year degrees.

Last year, Ballard appointed a Name Change Committee that included faculty, staff, students, members of the college's board of trustees and community members in Malvern and Hot Spring County.

Martin Eggensperger, vice president for instruction at OTC, heads the committee and said its members considered hundreds of names before presenting nine possibilities to the board of trustees on Dec. 1. The three remaining names were selected and released to gauge public reaction.

"The committee will continue to seek the opinion of the people we serve," Eggensperger said.

A small and unscientific survey

man on the street

Ouachita Technical College is looking to change its name. Does it matter to you, and do you have a preference?



BRANDEN LAMBERT
OTC adjunct professor

"I don't care what the name is as long as the students keep learning, but I understand what they are trying to do."
Prefers: College of the Ouachitas



JALENA MURDOCK
OTC staff member

"I have heard some of the names, and they seem kind of silly. It should stay the same. The others don't sound like colleges."
Prefers: No preference



JESSICA DAVIS
OTC student

"When I think of the school, I think of Ouachita Tech. It doesn't matter to me."
Prefers: Diamond State College



MELINDA DUNNING
OTC student

"The name is not really important to me. The thing that is important is that the school is small, and help is always easier to get. It would take much longer at a larger school."
Prefers: No preference



NATHANIEL BARNES
OTC student

"I like it the way it is. Everybody is used to saying OTC."
Prefers: College of the Ouachitas



SYLVIA PAGE
OTC graduate and substitute instructor

"I love the name Ouachita. I suggest they keep that in the name."
Prefers: College of the Ouachitas

on campus on Wednesday found that few students were concerned with the name change. Most said they liked the name Ouachita Tech, or simply OTC.

However comfortable students today may be with the existing name, school officials believe a new designation for the college will better reflect the school's mission.

"The new name will provide a foundation that the college plans to build on for the future and

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achieve even greater things for the school and its students in the coming years," Eggensperger said. "The name will be steeped in history and opportunities."

Once the board makes its final decision on the school's name, it will not be official until it is approved by an act of the Arkansas Legislature. That might not occur until the 2011 session.

Ballard said going to a new name will not be expensive for the college, which has endured budget cuts like all state colleges and universities.

He said most of the materials used by the school are reprinted every year, so there will be little waste, and the college is waiting until the new name is selected to replace existing signs leading into the campus.

To express an opinion on the three possible names for the school or to state a preference, go online to www.surveymonkey.com/LRBD5RR or to the college Web site, www.octweb.edu.

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