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Dr. West Appointed ASU Mid-South Chancellor, Pending Merger OK

WEST MEMPHIS, Ark. – Arkansas State University System President Dr. Charles L. Welch today announced the selection of Dr. Debra West as chancellor of the ASU Mid-South campus.

West, an Arkansas native with broad experience in community college workforce training initiatives, will succeed Dr. Glen Fenter, who will resign June 30 as the first president of Mid-South Community College to become CEO of the Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce. Pending approval by the Higher Learning Commission at its June 25-26 meeting, the college will become Arkansas State University Mid-South on July 1.

“We conducted an extensive national search, had four outstanding finalists and I believe hired one of the most competent and visionary administrators in the country,” Welch said. “An added benefit is Dr. West’s strong knowledge of, and commitment to, this institution and the Delta region as a whole. One of the search advisory committee members stated she was looking for a candidate who was strong in communication, motivation and innovation. Dr. West definitely excels in those areas, and the response received from all campus constituencies was overwhelmingly positive regarding her leadership abilities.



“It is never easy to hire a replacement for someone like Glen Fenter, but I am confident that Dr. West will continue to move this institution forward and continue its legacy as a workforce development and education leader in Arkansas,” Welch added. “I truly

believe we have hit a home run with this hire.”

A 14-member Chancellor Search Advisory Committee – with members representing faculty, staff, students and the community – reviewed 57 applications for the position. Four finalists were interviewed on campus in May.

A native of Forrest City, West has served as Deputy Executive Director for Programs and Accountability for Mississippi Community College Board since 2009, and previously she was the board’s Associate Executive Director for Workforce, Career, and Technical Education and the Director of Postsecondary Career & Technical Education. The MCCB is a state agency that oversees the 15 community and junior colleges in Mississippi.

“I am extremely honored to be named the first chancellor of Arkansas State University Mid-South,” West said. “As an East Arkansas native and former employee of Mid-South Community College, I am well-acquainted with the institution's reputation as a leader in learner-center education and workforce development. I look forward to the opportunity to build upon the tremendous foundation that Dr. Fenter established, and I am equally excited about working with Dr. Welch and the great faculty, staff and students at Mid-South as we start a new chapter in the history of this outstanding institution.”

She previously served Mid-South in two roles: Director of Enrollment Management from 2002-2004 and Registrar and Director of Institutional Research from 1997-2000. Her background also includes positions at East Arkansas Community College and the University of Memphis.

“I have complete confidence in Dr. West’s ability to continue to move this institution forward,” Fenter said. “Her familiarity with the college in its formative years and her experiences since leaving us give her unique insight into meeting the needs of our students and the many businesses we align with for workforce education. She will also be a tremendous asset to our Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce as we work to strengthen the economy of the entire region.”

West was awarded a Ph.D. in Community College Leadership from Mississippi State University, and a Bachelor and Master of Science from the University of Memphis. She holds an Associate of Arts degree from East Arkansas Community College.

West will join Mid-South on Aug. 1, Welch said, and her salary will be \$180,000. Dr. Barbara Baxter, executive vice president of Mid-South, will serve as interim chancellor for one month until West begins, Welch said.

Mid-South serves almost 2,000 students in Crittenden County and the surrounding area of the Delta. Originally established as a vocation-technical school, Mid-South became a comprehensive community college in 1992.

The ASU System serves 20,800 students throughout Arkansas and includes Arkansas

State University, a four-year research institution in Jonesboro; ASU-Beebe, with additional campuses in Heber Springs and Searcy; ASU-Newport, with additional campuses in Jonesboro and Marked Tree; ASU-Mountain Home; and instructional sites in Paragould and at the Little Rock Air Force Base.