



September 14, 2015

ASU System President, DRA Chairman host Reception for Mid-South Chancellor

Dr. Chuck Welch, Arkansas State University System president, and Chris Masingill, Delta Regional Authority Federal Co-Chairman, formally welcomed Dr. Debra West as the first chancellor of ASU Mid-South on Thursday.

Dr. Welch and Masingill hosted a well-attended afternoon reception in Dr. West's honor and addressed the value of leadership and partnerships.

"It is our pleasure to have this campus as a part of the ASU family," Welch said. "We believe there are some great synergies that we can combine to really move forward, and we are most excited about our new chancellor. She is going to be a tremendous asset not only to this institution but indeed to higher education in Arkansas. We're lucky to have her."

"I'm so excited about the relationship that Mid-South has with ASU," Masingill said. "I think that is a strong, strong signal that will be great for the institution, the system, and the citizens of the Delta region. I am a staunch supporter of our community colleges and the role that they play, particularly when it comes to career and technical training."





"Dr. West, I'm so glad you're coming home," Masingill continued. "I love the idea that you're from the region, and the work that you've been doing is going to make a great contribution here. I want to tell you on behalf of the eight states, 252 counties and parishes that make up my footprint, this is one of the institutions that I prize partnering with."

West became chancellor of the ASU Mid-South campus in August, filling the void left by the retirement of Dr. Glen Fenter, the first and only president of Mid-South Community College.

"When we began that process of finding the individual who would lead us into the future of this

institution and the new era as a part of the ASU system, we knew it was going to be a difficult task," Welch said. "We started with 57 candidates, and we were able to narrow that to four in almost one day because four really stood out.

"When we interviewed those four, one really stood out. She brought not only a familiarity of the area as a native of Forrest City and a former employee of this area, but certainly a diversity of experience from her time working with the community colleges in the state of Mississippi. She has a genuine love and passion for the types of students that we educate at this institution and a real understanding of the unique role and mission of this college. At the end of the day, it became a pretty easy decision."

West, a graduate and former employee of East Arkansas Community College, said her experiences at a two-year institution helped guide her toward her life's work.

"Having an educational institution in my home town and the opportunities that it afforded me made a difference in my life," she explained. "That experience convinced me about what I wanted to do with my life."



“I always had an interest in math and science, so that’s the major path that I chose. But at the end of the day, I knew that I wanted to take that and bring it back to my home town and make a difference in this region.”

West said eastern Arkansas needs difference makers, “and I think that everyone with the Arkansas State University System and everyone employed by this institution” have embraced that mindset. “That’s what we are; that’s what we do.”

She said her goal is to build on the great accomplishments of the college during Fenter’s lengthy tenure.

“I look forward to serving this institution and using the foundation that Dr. Glen Fenter built to take it to the next level. We have the best faculty and staff, and I think you’re going to see great things from this institution moving forward, largely a credit to them. We could not do the work we do for this community and the state without dedicated employees.”

In addition to praising the new chancellor, Welch recognized members of the MSCC Board of Trustees for their “vision and willingness to make this happen. We had a very seamless process, and they were tremendous every step of the way. Partnerships like this aren’t easy for a board of trustees, but they realized the benefits it would have for this campus.”

He also saluted the chancellor selection committee. “I had a wonderful search committee; they worked very hard.”

Four members of the ASU System Board of Trustees attended the reception in Dr. West’s honor, as did three fellow chancellors. Participating board members included Charles Luter of



Paragould, Howard Slinkard of Rogers, Ron Rhodes of Cherokee Village, and Niel Crowson of Jonesboro. The chancellors' contingent included Dr. Tim Hudson of A-State, Dr. Sandra Massey of ASU-Newport, and Dr. Robin Myers of ASU-Mountain Home.

For information about ASU Mid-South, see the college's website at www.asumidsouth.edu. For information about the ASU System, see www.asusystem.edu.

