

# History of PCCUA

In **1964**, leaders from all parts of Arkansas became enthusiastic about the public community college concept and undertook the difficult task of amending the state's constitution to permit the development of a system of community colleges in Arkansas.

The official history of Phillips County Community College dates from two events in **1965**: (1) Act 560 of the Arkansas State Legislature, which paved the way for establishing community colleges; and (2) an affirmative vote by the people of Phillips County on **October 23, 1965**, which provided the local financial support for the College.

The Board of Trustees was appointed by the Governor of the State and met for the first time on **November 1, 1965**, officially creating Phillips County Community College. An early order of business for the Board was the election of Dr. John Easley as the first president of the College. The Board of Trustees decided that since construction of a new plant would take approximately two years, classes would begin in the Naval Reserve Building in Helena. The building served as home for Phillips County Community College for two years. In **May, 1968**, the first class was graduated. Construction of the permanent College facilities was also completed in **1968**.

In **1972**, the Fine Arts Center and Lily Peter Auditorium were completed with the help of generous support from the community. In **1976**, the Nursing Education Complex was completed. In **1982**, the Technical & Industrial Education Complex was opened. In **1986**, the Administration Building was completed, and a year later, the college library was renovated and named the Lewis Library, thanks to the generosity of the A. B. Lewis family.

In **1988**, Dr. Easley retired, and the administration building was renamed in his honor. Dr. Steven W. Jones was elected by the Board of Trustees to be the College's second president.

Since that time, the College has experienced dramatic growth with the expansion of curriculum and facilities. Enrollment increased steadily in the **early 1990's**, and the Asa W. Bonner Student Center was dedicated in **1991**. The Mitchell Science Annex was added to the Nursing Education Complex in **1992**. In **1993**, the College was given the historic Pillow-Thompson House in Helena by Josephine Thompson. The house was renovated and reopened in **May of 1997**.

In **March 1996**, the people of Arkansas County passed a referendum to annex that county into the PCCC taxing district. The Board of Trustees changed the name of the College to Phillips Community College to reflect the multi-county support and began plans to expand the off-campus programs in Stuttgart. In **June 1996**, the State transferred the former Rice Belt Technical Institute in DeWitt to Phillips Community College, and on **July 1, 1996**, Phillips became a member of the University of Arkansas System.

Facilities in Arkansas County have grown to include day and evening classes in Stuttgart and general education programs in DeWitt. The over 45,000-square-foot Stuttgart facility is equipped with classrooms, labs, a library, bookstore and offices. The DeWitt facility expansion and reconstruction included an addition of 14,000 square feet and renovations to 15,000 square feet.

In the **fall of 2003**, Dr. Steven Murray was named the third chancellor of Phillips Community College. Also, in **2003**, the Grand Prairie War Memorial Auditorium Board in Stuttgart voted to offer a long-term lease of the auditorium to the College as a technology training center. In **2007**, the National Guard Armory in DeWitt was leased to the College as a headquarters for the agriculture program. With the generous support of the community, the Grand Prairie Center, a 60,000-square-foot multi-purpose facility, opened in **2011**.

Upon the retirement of Dr. Steven Murray in **June of 2015**, the University of Arkansas System named Dr. Keith Pinchback as PCCUA's fourth chancellor, effective **July 1, 2015**.

In **2017** the DeWitt campus expanded the Community Room, added a kitchen, and renamed it the Elmer and Gladys Ferguson Community Room. In **2017** the Bonner Center was updated adding new furniture and other changes. Numerous building projects were begun on all three campuses which involved roofing, repainting, and new carpeting. Additionally, the College opened Food Pantries on all three campuses.

In the **Fall of 2018** all student services on the Helena campus were moved to the top floor of the John Easley Administration Building in an effort to establish a one-stop approach for students which included Registration and Admissions, the Office of Financial Aid, and Testing and placement. That same year, the Stuttgart War Memorial Training Center was renovated. In the **Summer of 2019** the Helena campus Fine Arts Center was renovated and renamed the Hendrix Fine Arts Center. In **2020** the college added the Rowdy Ride, a bus used to transport students in Phillips County.

Phillips Community College has always been a leader and innovator in higher education in Arkansas. The College has grown from an original enrollment of fewer than 250 students in 14 program areas to just under 2,000 students in academic, occupational/technical, and continuing education programs. New programs are continually being researched and planned so that PCCUA will remain responsive to the needs and interests of the people of Eastern Arkansas and on the Grand Prairie.