



PHOTO, 4B

Take a look at Embassy Suites' grand opening.

Embassy Suites provides students with new opportunities



Photo by: Krishnan Collins | Editor-in-Chief

Embassy Suites hosted a grand opening March 5 and opened the ceremony with a ribbon cutting. Many prominent figures and student associations from the A-State community attended.

KRISHNAN COLLINS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Embassy Suites hotel on Arkansas State's campus held its official grand opening March 5 and with the hotel on campus comes new opportunities for A-State students.

Besides the hotel bringing people to campus and giving people a place to stay in Jonesboro, there are tangible benefits for students while in college and even after in relation to the hotel. Students hold the opportunity to have internships, work and take classes in the hotel as part of the Neil Griffin College of Business.

The college currently offers a management degree with an emphasis in hospitality management, and the college is in the process of hiring a new director of hospitality

management. Then, there will be a full fledged hospitality program that Dr. Karen McDaniel, the chair of management and marketing, said hopes to be implemented in fall 2021.

"We have a partnership with Embassy Suites," McDaniel said. "They are going to offer what is called a living laboratory. I'm actually having one of my classes in it this semester to start building the relationship with them because we don't currently have the hospitality program in place. The hope is in the future, when we get our new hospitality director, that they will actually have class in the Embassy Suites Red Wolf Convention Center in the living laboratory. Then students can literally walk out and get experience with some of the staff there that they have. We already have students doing internships there. I know we've had at least two students who

did internships who are getting full time jobs there."

McDaniel said students reading a book and then taking an exam about the book is just learning the theory of the subject, but actually being able to do what they have read is an important part of application.

"I think the exciting part is we have this partnership with them," McDaniel said. "So lets say the new hospitality director is teaching a class about hotel operations, they can walk out and go talk to the hotel operations manager and connect with that person and see how it's done."

Chancellor Dr. Kelly Damphousse said recruiting to the program will really kick off now that the hotel is open. McDaniel said she agreed with that statement.

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HOTEL, 4A



Photo by: Krishnan Collins | Editor-in-Chief

The inside of the event was filled with food of all kinds, including three pigs, along with hand-crafted milk-shakes and cookies. There were also multiple stations to get drinks.

Enrollment down as more students go online and into the workforce

CHASE GAGE
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

Enrollment at Arkansas State University is on the decline, but it isn't all doom and gloom in Jonesboro.

Both domestic and international enrollment in graduate and undergraduate studies are down at Arkansas State, with overall enrollment down around 3%. However, as in-person enrollment falls, online enrollment is on the rise.

According to Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management Bryan Terry,

though "face-to-face" student enrollment is down 7%, online student enrollment has risen by 3% compared to previous semesters. A-State is home to the largest online college in the state of Arkansas, while also serving as the most affordable, and one of the largest in the entire region.

"If they're online, they used to be face-to-face," Terry said. "The fact that our online programs are growing is a direct result of the decline of in-person students. The convenience of an online opportunity is a good idea for some students."

The online program also



COURTESY OF A-STATE

Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management Dr. Bryan Terry encourages students to tell their friends college is important.

provides an avenue for non-traditional or returning students that may not feel comfortable in a traditional classroom setting.

The focus, though, is on growing the rate of enrollment for high school graduates.

A decline in enrollment isn't an issue unique to Arkansas State, though.

In 2017, 69% of high school graduates in the United States enrolled in college. However, in the state of Arkansas, that percentage dropped to 47%. Not only are fewer students enrolling in college at all.

From there, that 47% is split between several four-year colleges across the state. In short, there isn't a strong

stream of students entering the collegiate ranks.

"That's a scary thought for the state," Terry said.

According to Terry, one of the biggest underlying threats to enrollment at A-State and across the nation is the idea that college degrees are no longer worth the time and money.

As more high school students choose to join the workforce or go to trade school upon graduation, colleges and universities are taking a hit.

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ENROLLMENT, 4A