

(Neb.)-Chadron State Looks Back At 2012

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 12/28/2012 10:30 AM

(Chadron)-When historians look back at 2012, they likely will see it as a year of monumental change for Chadron State College.

The year included a long list of significant highlights. The institution broke ground on two large construction projects, transitioned to a new president, set an enrollment milestone, and implemented a new general studies program. CSC's offerings also received high marks from a variety of national news and information services.

In early September, the college staged a ceremonial groundbreaking for the Coffee Agriculture Pavilion, the first stage of the Rangeland Complex which is being constructed at the east edge of college property on a hill overlooking the main campus. Dirt and foundation work for the indoor arena, suitable for handling large animals and as a practice facility for the college's intercollegiate rodeo program, neared completion as 2012 was drawing to a close.

Highlighting the homecoming festivities in October, fans gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking for the renovation and expansion of the Armstrong Physical Education Building. As 2013 begins, work will become visible to passers-by as construction workers begin laying the foundation for the new arena, which will serve CSC's indoor sports programs.

Throughout the past year, the college also completed its next 10-year master plan for facilities and firmed up plans for Eagle Ridge, a housing facility at the east side of campus that will replace the aging West Court Apartments.

In all, the three big projects total about \$19 million and will mark the most aggressive period of construction for the campus in decades.

In May, Dr. Janie Park, retired to Montana after seven years of leadership at the institution. The Nebraska State College System named Park's longtime associate Dr. Randy Rhine, CSC vice president for enrollment management and student services, to become interim president. In late November, NSCS Chancellor Stan Carpenter announced that the NSCS Board of Trustees will name Rhine the institution's 11th president at its January 2013 meeting. Rhine has been at CSC since December 2005, when he was hired to provide leadership in increasing enrollment and designing initiatives targeting CSC's mission of access to affordable high quality education.

Rhine was among CSC employees who were able to celebrate when the institution's enrollment reached 3,000 in October, a 2.15 percent increase from the 2,937 reported on the same date the previous year. The last time CSC ended a term with enrollment above 3,000 was 1997.

As CSC welcomed a large freshman class in the fall, it also implemented a new general studies program. Essential Studies, which will allow CSC students to graduate with 120 credit hours instead of the previously required 125, features First-Year Inquiry courses for freshmen and Capstone courses for seniors. The set of courses, which take a multi-discipline approach and capitalize on team teaching, are designed to help students "explore and understand critical thinking, problem solving and the nature of inquiry."

The Essential Studies program is just one of the academic initiatives at CSC that is garnering recognition.

In January 2012, a website that specializes in comparing institutions of higher education listed CSC among the top five non-profit online colleges and universities in the nation. The list was published by SR Education Group's flagship site, Guide to

Online Schools. CSC earned the No. 5 spot in the rankings, which resulted from the evaluations of more than 200 accredited online schools.

Also in spring 2012, a website that ranks online Master's of Business Administration degrees gave CSC high marks for its MBA program. The site, mbaonline.com, put CSC's online MBA at No. 12 on its list of colleges and universities of all sizes from coast to coast.

Also, for the third consecutive year, Military Times Edge magazine placed CSC on its "Best for Vets" list of colleges and universities. CSC's No. 11 ranking, which was announced during the fall semester, is the institution's highest yet. More than 650 institutions responded to the publication's survey.