



# NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

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## AT&T contributes \$10,000 to NSU for college prep program at Fort Gibson Schools

TAHLEQUAH, Okla., Dec. 13, 2010 — AT&T\* today announced that it is contributing \$10,000 to Northeastern State University (NSU) in Tahlequah to assist in the funding of an ACT college preparation program for students at Fort Gibson Public Schools. The contribution is funded by the AT&T Foundation, the philanthropic arm of AT&T.

NSU is developing an enhanced program that combines academic training and ACT test preparation skills with ongoing tracking and analyzing of student achievement levels to boost test scores and success at the college level.

"Through this program, we're focused not only on improving ACT scores, but increasing the number of Fort Gibson students who eventually attend college and boosting their performance once they're in college," said Dr. Don Betz, NSU president. "Increasing the number of Oklahoma high school students who attend college and graduate is critically important for our region and our state."

Derald Glover, superintendent, Fort Gibson Public Schools, said he's excited about partnering with NSU. "This program offers a great opportunity to our at-risk students who otherwise might not have a chance to attend college."

Glover said the program will be offered to 120 Fort Gibson seniors who have taken the ACT test at least once. The students' test scores will be monitored and analyzed by a team of NSU specialists who will work with the students to maximize each student's ACT scores.

"Many of our students would be the first in their families to attend college," said Glover. "By helping them to increase their ACT scores and be better prepared for college, we can also help them qualify for more scholarships and financial aid."

The ACT initiative at Fort Gibson is part of NSU's Community Outreach and Recruitment Effort. Faculty and staff join CORE teams and assist the university with initiatives to increase enrollment, alumni connection and parental involvement.

CORE goals are to increase enrollment through connection with prospective students, recognize the achievements of students, alumni and community members, increase institutional exposure and increase financial support and the engagement of alumni and parents with the university.

Members of CORE expressed gratitude for AT&T's generous support of the ACT preparation program.

"The grant from AT&T is going to allow NSU to be a resource to Fort Gibson Public Schools and assist them in what they have self-identified as an area for improvement: raising ACT scores," said Anita Thompson, development and grants officer for NSU's College of Education.

Dana Boren-Boer, NSU marketing coordinator, said the ACT initiative will allow the university to expand its reach and impact the lives of families through educational partnership.

"The earlier we can expose students to college opportunities and NSU, the more successful we will be at helping to improve the lives of those students and their communities," she said.

Daniel Johnson, director of alumni services, said he knew of no more comprehensive and coordinated effort to enhance ACT scores.

"We are thrilled with this partnership that has come together with Fort Gibson Schools, AT&T and Northeastern and are especially thankful for AT&T's support to help reinforce the importance of family and school participation in preparing

students for the ACT," he said.

Jerry Cook, director of community relations, called the initiative "new ground" and said improved ACT scores could even help the budgets of NSU and students.

"The ACT is an indicator of remedial needs and in most cases requires the entering college freshman to enroll in zero level classes which are noncredit and are a costly investment for both the student and the university," he said. "If we can assist the student in achieving higher ACT academic test scores it will eliminate the cost of remedial classes for the students and their families and allow the student to move more quickly to academic success and degree completion."

The contribution to NSU is one of 13 announced this month by AT&T that are going to Oklahoma colleges and schools to bolster higher education and student programs.

"Improving our educational system at all levels and ensuring that more students stay in school and graduate are important goals for AT&T," said Bryan Gonterman, president, AT&T Oklahoma. "An educated workforce helps to bring new businesses to our state, generate better-paying jobs and strengthen our overall economy."

Gonterman commended state Sen. Earl Garrison and state Rep. George Faught, both of Muskogee, for their ongoing support of initiatives to improve the quality of education in Oklahoma.

"The quality of education in Oklahoma should be the concern of every citizen and every business in our great state," said Garrison. "I'm encouraged when the business community reaches out to support our education system."

"This contribution extends a long tradition of Oklahoma businesses supporting public education," Faught said. "We need to grow and encourage the partnership between schools and business for our education system to continue to excel."

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#### **About Philanthropy at AT&T**

For 25 years, AT&T and the AT&T Foundation have been committed to advancing education, strengthening communities and improving lives. Through its philanthropic initiatives and partnerships, AT&T supports projects that create learning opportunities; promote academic and economic achievement; and address community needs. As the AT&T Foundation celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2009, more than \$160 million was contributed through corporate-, employee- and AT&T Foundation-giving programs in 2008 alone.

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