"Transforming Lives Through Quality Learning Experiences" is our motto. In this report you will see how much "Transforming" we accomplished in just one year!

2017 Marked the 90th Anniversary of the founding of ASU-Beebe. The University celebrated this milestone in its history as the oldest 2-year college in Arkansas with a series of community-focused events. This celebration became a partnering endeavor as businesses and industry in each of the college's four community locations engaged to help sponsor the four-month event series. Read the full summary and see photos from the celebration events on Pages 4-9.

Leadership & Change: The 2017-2018 school year began with a group of new leadership in roles across the spectrum at ASU-Beebe from an interim chancellor to changes in program coordinators at the core academic levels. This infusion of experience and talent sparked an innovation in the student experience at ASUB. Check out the panel of personnel that joined ASUB in significant roles this year on Pages 10-11.

Donors, scholarships, and endowments make a significant impact on the lives of students at ASU-Beebe, especially those students who are the first in their families to go to college. And the dedication and generosity of our alumni and donors perpetuates the responsibility to "pay it forward!" See our list of honor dedicated to those generous scholarship donors on Page 13-14.

Demographics and Financial Statements: For a graphical look at the numbers for our students, employees and financial information see the graphs on Pages 15-17.

Rebirth of Culture: through growing Concert / Lecture Series Events at ASU-Beebe on Pages 18-19.

Keeping pace with technology: advances are critical in every industry and business today to remain competitive in the marketplace. Education is no different; in fact, it is even more important as the training ground for tomorrow’s workforce. This year ASU-Beebe made significant investments in upgrades across many systems and platforms supplying speed, power and enhanced capabilities. Read more about these changes and benefits to students and classrooms on Pages 22-23.

Technical training advancements and new equipment: for student interaction are critical to preparing highly skilled workers to be prepared for today's workforce. This year two programs at the ASU-Beebe Searcy Campus received grants that made the purchase of new technology training equipment possible for these programs. See more on these training additions on Page 21.

In addition to staffing and leadership, ASU-Beebe undertook many new technological upgrades in both software and hardware improvements. This investment of well over $1.5 million expanded capabilities to include campus management systems, financial aid, improved wireless speeds for students and classrooms, new web-assisted class technology, a new ASUB.edu web site and brand new mobile app. Today technology drives nearly every aspect of modern life. These improvements were necessary to keep ASU-Beebe competitive and capable of continuing to deliver the quality of education necessary for today’s students and that was demanded by local and regional workforce needs.

Academically, Dr. Kerry Mix, provost and Chief Academic Officer, along with the division deans initiated a review of all programs and courses as a gauge of continued relevance and necessity to degree plans. Meanwhile, several career education programs underwent accreditation and external review evaluations—all of which were recertified and drew high praise from the evaluation teams. Additionally, a number of our programs were highly ranked, both locally and nationally. And ASU-Beebe was again ranked by the Aspen Institute among the Top 150 Community Colleges in the nation.

Lastly, but most importantly, this year we opened our campuses and partnered with our communities more than ever before. Through community-focused events and making our facilities available to community groups and leaders, we are building a resurgence of interest and attendance of ASU-Beebe events, concert/lecture programs and theater events. There is great ambition and potential among our faculty, staff and students.

I am proud to have served this period as your Interim Chancellor. This has been a tremendous year for growth and change at ASU-Beebe, but this is really just the foundation for where we look to grow in the future for our students and our communities. Together the future looks bright!

Roger L. Moore
ASU-Beebe's history began in 1927, when State Senator William H. Abington, a medical doctor and a prominent member of the Beebe community, proposed and successfully lobbied for legislation to establish an agricultural school in the center of the state. The legislation was written specifically to set up such a school in Beebe, the only town that met the precise criteria.

Act 282 of the Arkansas General Assembly established the institution as the Junior Agricultural School of Central Arkansas. The first classes were held in October 1929 with 38 students enrolled. The first graduating class was in 1933.

Through the Great Depression, the college and the local high school shared facilities and faculty. In 1939, State Hall was completed and is the second oldest building on campus.

The university joined with Arkansas State College in Jonesboro (now Arkansas State University) in 1955, and Act 84 established Arkansas State College-Beebe Branch, which began operating under the authority of the president and board of trustees of Arkansas State College but ran its programs independently. B. E. Whitmore was the first to serve as dean of the college during his last year at the school.

The college began teaching classes at the Little Rock Air Force Base in 1965. Growth there was substantial, expanding the future security of the college. The Air Force provides ASU-Beebe and other higher education institutions the facilities to operate programs as a part of the LRABF Education Center.

In 1967, Arkansas State College became Arkansas State University and the Beebe unit became Arkansas State University-Beebe Branch. Act 90 of 2001 by the Arkansas General Assembly removed the term ‘branch’ from legislation affecting ASU-Beebe.

In 1985, the Arkansas State Technical Institute (ASTI) was created by ACT 496 of the Arkansas General Assembly, in response to a proposal submitted by the university seeking to establish a state technical institute to provide one and two-year training and short courses in the "Hi-Tech" fields.

As the campus at Beebe continued to experience growth and change, this included the addition of other campuses and curricula, which expanded ASU-Beebe's mission.

In 1991, White River Vocational Technical School merged with ASU-Beebe, and was renamed ASU-Beebe/Newport. Then in 2000, the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the status of ASU-Newport as a stand-alone campus.

In Fall 1997, ASU-Beebe agreed to offer courses at Heber Springs. Arkansas General Assembly Act 426 of 1999 officially established the Heber Springs campus in response to the community's desire to have a two-year college presence in Cleburne County. The need for a permanent home became apparent as student demand was unabated, and in 2000, the first facility was built in the Cleburne County Industrial Park on Highway 210 East. Known as the John L. Latimer Skills Training Center, the building was a 25,000 square foot multi-functional facility, with ten classrooms, two computer labs, and a large industrial-type training room that could be converted for classes to meet the training needs of local industry.


ASU-Beebe further expanded its offerings through its partnership with Arkansas State University-Jonesboro in 1995 and began offering upper level business courses. Today, students may take baccalaureate and graduate degree coursework in areas such as education, nursing, and business. The university also began delivering courses via the Internet in 1999. Since then, the demand for this alternative online form of educational delivery has grown substantially.

The ASU-Beebe at Searcy campus was added in 2003, following a merger with Foothills Vocational Technical School, which had operated at the site since 1966. The Searcy campus serves traditional and non-traditional students earning technical certificates or associate degrees. The Searcy campus has a primary focus on technical and occupational programs, where students can complete most of the programs in about one year and earn a technical certificate. The Searcy campus offers programs, such as practical nursing, air conditioning, auto body, automotive, computer machining technology, diesel technology, welding, and EMT/Paramedics.

The college offers degrees and certificate options, including programs in agriculture, business, education, fine arts, computer information technology, nursing and welding. ASU-Beebe has four unique programs not offered anywhere else in Arkansas, including John Deere Agriculture
Equipment Technology, Pharmacy Technology, Veterinary Technology and the only two-year college in central Arkansas to offer an Associate of Fine Arts degree with an emphasis in music, theater, graphic design or creative arts enterprise.

In addition, ASU-Beebe has one of the only working farms on a community college in the state. The unique university facilities are used to impart real-world agricultural principles to students through hands-on learning. The 150-acre farm features pasture, livestock working facilities, an orchard, an arena, greenhouse and shop.

ASU-Beebe is the only two-year college in the state with residence halls for students. Dedicated in 2011, these facilities offer single and double suites to house a total of 248 students. Each has study halls, a computer lab, game room and lounging area.

ASU-Beebe is nationally recognized by the Aspen Institute for student success rates. For the third time since 2011, the university was included in the top 150 community colleges in the nation by the prestigious Aspen Institute. The Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence is the nation’s signature recognition of high achievement and performance and recognizes institutions for exceptional student outcomes in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high levels of access and success for minority and low-income students.

The event series began with a lecture and book signing by author and ASU-Beebe graduate, Cara Brookins in September at the Searcy High School Performing Arts Center. Brookins discussed her book “Rise, How a House Built a Family,” which is a memoir about escaping domestic violence with her four children and building a 3,500 square foot home from the ground up with their own hands using skills they learned by watching YouTube videos.

The celebrations continued in October, when the ASU-Beebe Heber Springs campus partnered with Sugarloaf Heritage Council to host a ‘Climb and Dine’ event. Sugarloaf Mountain provides visitors an opportunity to explore several of the trails that lead to the top of the mountain to behold the panoramic view of Heber Springs, nearby Little Red River and the Heber Springs campus. The hike was followed by a free BBQ lunch provided by Arrow’s Cafe held at the Jerry Smith Family Pavilion.

Native Arkansan and season eight American Idol winner Kris Allen gave a community concert at the Beebe campus.

The final event of the 90th event series was a Veteran’s Day celebration in November to honor ASU-Beebe’s long-standing relationship with Little Rock AFB and military students in the community. Dr. Buck Foster with the University of Central Arkansas History Department spoke on “The Great War in Arkansas,” which was a sanctioned event of the Arkansas World War I Centennial. The Veterans Salute included special music presented by the ASU-Beebe Symphonic Band. The ASU-Beebe ROTC students assisted with the inflatable Obstacle Course, and Blackhawk helicopters were on campus for viewing.
"Bringing in Kris Allen as part of the 90th Anniversary of ASU-Beebe, and opening it up to our communities, says a lot about the continued focus of ASUB on being a true “community” college. We thoroughly enjoyed the performance, and getting to meet Kris was a great bonus that we'll cherish for years to come.” — Mark Bailey, Jr., Centennial Bank

As a small community college, ASU-Beebe fits the mold perfectly offering a mix of general education courses for Associates Degrees, along with a number of technical and trades training programs. Yet, as the oldest community college in Arkansas, ASU-Beebe touts several unique programs not available at other higher education institutions in the state. ASU-Beebe also has strong relationships with the communities that house its campuses. This became evident as the college prepared to celebrate its 90th anniversary.

"University administration had talked about the 90-year anniversary in 2017 since early in 2016," said Carissa Gillam, special events coordinator for ASU-Beebe. "And each planning meeting centered on not only how to celebrate, what events to hold and how to involve students, faculty and staff, but also how to engage with and bring the community on to the campuses."

With discussions and planning moving forward for the 90th celebration, costs, logistical requirements and many other factors became much clearer.

“We figured out pretty quickly that we were going to have to raise some funds to make the anniversary celebration a reality,” said Rose Mary Jackson, associate vice chancellor of Institutional Advancement. “When we pitched our idea about truly celebrating the relationship that the college has shared with the communities that have supported us through the years—people jumped at the idea to participate as a sponsor.”

In altering the concept of the 90th anniversary from an organizational recognition event to a more community-focused series involving each campus and community, ASUB leadership decided that as many events as possible should be presented FREE and open to the public. This further reinforced the college’s commitment to being — THE community college!

Many times you hear that multiple organizations have “partnered” to bring about some event for the benefit of the entire community. It may sound a bit cliché—but this partnership was truly evident in the combined efforts of ASU-Beebe Administration and the community leaders where ASU-Beebe has campus locations—Beebe, Searcy, Heber Springs and Jacksonville/Cabot for the Little Rock Air Force Base campus.

“This historic anniversary was very important to us (ASU-Beebe) as an organization, but what we found was it was also very important to the people of our communities as well,” Gillam said.

At right are all of those that contributed from $500 to $2,000 toward the 90th Anniversary events.

Now that the celebrations were successful, we want to thank our community partners without whom we could not have made the 90th Anniversary Celebration a series of true community events. We value and appreciate our communities and partners as together we continue to “Transform Lives Through Quality Learning Experiences!”

“I have lived in Beebe since 1975, and I have always felt ASU-Beebe is the center of Beebe and of great benefit and growth opportunity to the community. ASUB does a great job of educating people from all areas and backgrounds!” — Cathy R. Eoff, Eoff Realty, Inc.
The 2017-2018 school year was a great season for ASU-Beebe as the college celebrated its 90th anniversary – the oldest 2-year college in Arkansas. But this year was also significant for the institution in moving forward in its mission and vision – remaining student-focused and “Transforming Lives Through Quality Learning Experiences.”

This was the second year in an evolution of change to a chancellor-provost model of administration that began in 2016 through the development of a new “Strategic Plan”. And, as evolution does, changes in leadership are inherent to moving forward. This school year began with a change in leadership as Dr. Chuck Welch, president of the ASU System, named Roger Moore interim chancellor just weeks before the fall semester began. Other new, talented individuals were added to a variety of key leadership roles throughout the college. Three new deans were added to continue the development of the Provost model of academic governance. The experience and expertise of these individuals helped to align and clarify the roles and responsibilities of faculty and staff across all our academic programs. New leaders were also added in various departments and programs bringing experience and added capability. Here is a brief look at this group of leaders and the cornucopia of experience and talent they bring to affect the future of ASU-Beebe.

Dr. Suzanne Bailey, Dean of Career Education Division, has more than 26 years experience in the K-12 sector and began her educational career as a classroom teacher in the Beebe Public School System. She went on to serve as a gifted and talented instructor/director, federal programs director, elementary administrator, and secondary administrator, capping off her K-12 experience by serving five years as Superintendent at the Lonoke School District. She has also served as an adjunct faculty member in the educational leadership program at A-State since 2014.

Dr. Bailey began her higher education journey at ASU-Beebe, earning an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts. She now holds a Bachelor of Science in elementary education from the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, and a Master of Educational Administration from Harding University. She has also completed the Superintendent’s Program of Study/District Administrator’s License P-12 and earned a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, both from Harding University.

Dr. Jason Goodner, Dean of Arts and Humanities Division, is a native of southwest Georgia, and served as Executive Director for Assessment and Accreditation/SACSCOC Liaison and Assistant Professor of Sociology at Albany State University. At previous institutions, he has served as a chief academic officer, director of an off-campus instructional site, academic department chair, academic program coordinator, student services officer, and admissions officer. In addition to his extensive administrative experience, Dr. Goodner brings more than 14 years of higher education classroom instruction experience working with traditional and non-traditional students in on-campus, web-enhanced, and online instructional environments.

Dr. Goodner holds a Doctorate in Education focused on adult and career education from Valdosta State University (GA) and a Master of Science in Social Administration from Georgia Southwestern State University.

Dr. Tina Moore, Dean of Business, Math and Science Division, has taught high school and college students, and provided training and professional development to educators with the primary goals of improving instruction and increasing student engagement, learning, and achievement. Her role as a school improvement consultant included program and systems evaluation throughout the state of Arkansas. Dr. Moore has also worked in the business sector in the pharmaceutical industry. As director at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Center for Health Literacy, she managed all programs and services, led center staff, and collaborated with faculty on inter-professional education curriculum.

Dr. Moore earned her Doctorate in Education focused on leadership, curriculum, and instruction from Liberty University (VA), as well as a Master’s in Education from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock focused on secondary mathematics education.

Bonnie Burgoyne, Director of Financial Aid, hails from Clinton, Mississippi. Burgoyne received a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Belhaven College in Jackson, Mississippi and a master’s degree in educational leadership from Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota. She taught elementary school for several years before entering the financial aid profession.

Burgoyne’s responsibilities as director include ensuring ASU-Beebe’s compliance to federal, state, and institutional financial aid regulations and managing the financial aid offices at each campus location.

“I love working in the financial aid profession and assisting college students in navigating through the confusing process and forms that are required. It is very fulfilling to see students succeed in the college environment,” said Burgoyne.

Leonard Mesa, Director of Workforce and Community Development, of Cabot, formerly of San Antonio, has over 18 years in the food manufacturing industry. Mesa’s experience included production, processing, and quality management. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Food Science. In 2009, Mesa received a Master of Business Administration from Arkansas State University, graduating with honors distinction.

Mesa was a member of the 2017 Searcy Leadership Institute and has been active in Boxes of Hope and “The Kitchen” Drive-Through Meals in Cabot. He is a member of the Institute of Food Technologists, American Society for Quality, and Beta Gamma Sigma. Mesa said “Working at ASU-Beebe has provided the resources needed to help the people in the communities we serve to grow and unlock their potential.”

Keith Moore, Executive Director of Marketing and Public Relations, is a native of Jacksonville, and is responsible for the planning, development, and implementation of all of the university’s marketing strategies, communications, and public relations activities. Moore retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2017 after serving 34 years and 10 months with the Arkansas Air National Guard. He also previously worked as the Marketing and Administrative Support Services Coordinator for the Arkansas offices of BKD, LLP, the 7th largest public accounting firm in the nation.

Moore received a bachelor’s degree in News Journalism from Arkansas State University and a Master’s degree in Media Communications from Webster University.
Arkansas State University-Beebe students, faculty, staff and alumni were honored at the Arkansas Community Colleges (ACC) fall conference held at the State House Convention Center in Little Rock on October 15-17, 2017.

BAO VAN was named ASU-Beebe’s Academic All-Star. He served as president of the Student Advisory Board, has a 4.0 GPA, and is a member of the Leadership Council, Gamma Beta Phi, and volunteers as a firefighter in his hometown of Lonoke. Van credits his success in community college to the ASU-Beebe TRIO program. TRIO has helped him navigate the educational process and overcome barriers that came with English being his second language. He now serves other students in the program as a peer math and science tutor. Van plans to attend A-State to complete his bachelor’s degree in biology. His goal is to become an Optometrist and practice in Arkansas.

TOM BRANNAN was named recipient of the Outstanding Alumni Award. He attended ASU-Beebe from 1985 to 1987. He has been a meteorologist at KTHV for 21 years! The event that sparked Brannon’s interest in weather occurred on March 29, 1976 when, as a third grader, a tornado almost destroyed downtown Cabot. Brannon enjoys working with children and educating them about weather and volunteering his time working with charitable organizations such as the Arkansas Food Bank. He travels the state performing various duties for groups and non-profits. Brannon and his wife, Leigh Ann, live in Little Rock with their daughter, Sophia.

TEDDY DAVIS, associate professor of political science, was named recipient of the Outstanding Faculty Award. Davis has taught at ASU-Beebe for 33 years and began her career as an instructor in political science and geography. Davis received an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts from ASU-Beebe in 1978, and then transferred to Arkansas State, where she received a bachelor’s degree in social science, a master’s degree in political science, and a specialist degree in Community College Teaching. Davis has served as a division chair and received the Positive Teacher award. She enjoys advising education majors, saying “If you are doing a job that you love, and if you feel like you are making a difference in the world, then you are a success.”

LINDA YELDER, associate director of Financial Aid, was presented the Outstanding Staff Award. She began her career at ASU-Beebe in 1999 as a Financial Aid Officer I, later moving to an Officer II, and then to the Assistant Director position before promoting into her current position. Over the course of the last 18 years, Yelder’s commitment to enhancing the understanding of the financial aid process has benefited many. She was noted for going above and beyond to help students, as well as faculty and staff. Yelder said one of the most rewarding pieces of her job is seeing someone she has helped in previous years become successful.

“ASU-Beebe is proud of our scholarship recipients and grateful to the foundation scholarship donors for making educational opportunities available to ASU-Beebe students.” — Rose Mary Jackson, Associate Vice Chancellor of Institutional Advancement

FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH DONOR GENEROSITY

To establish or contribute to an ASU-Beebe scholarship, contact the ASU-Beebe Office of Institutional Advancement at 501-882-8855, or visit the website at www.ASUB.edu
Students by County

DEMOGRAPHICS, ACADEMICS, DEGREES
JUST THE FACTS: ASU-BEEBE AT A GLANCE!

STUDENTS BY ORIGIN:
Arkansas = 3,664
Out-of-state = 52
International = 22

STUDENTS BY GENDER
59% FEMALE
41% MALE

Degrees & Certificates Awarded 2016 - 2017

Employees by category

Natural Resources, Construction & Maintenance
15
Transport & Material Moving
1
Sales & Related Occupations
1

Community & Social Services, Art, Design & Media
18
Healthcare Technicians
9
Office & Administrative Support
43

Computer, Engineering & Sciences
11
Management Occupations
33

Business & Financial
19
Student Academic & Educational Services
20

Library Technicians
7

— One graduation cap = 50 students —
ASU-BEEBE PERFORMING ARTS
NEW INSTRUCTOR ENHANCES PROGRAM

“ASU-Beebe is transforming the lives of students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to go to college. Our instructors truly care about our students, and I feel privileged to be a part of the instructional environment here at ASU-Beebe.” — Ryan Gibbons

RYAN GIBBONS, formerly of Wooster, OH, joined ASU-Beebe as instructor of theater and communications this spring. Gibbons spent 30 years as a minister, teacher, creative consultant and manager for a professional traveling drama team. He received a bachelor’s degree from Harding University in 1991 and a master’s degree from Texas Christian University (TCU) in 2003. Gibbons owns an antique shop in Searcy called the Monk’s Habit Antique Shoppe and plays the guitar, mandolin and enjoys singing.

For students wishing to pursue a career in music, the Associate of Fine Arts Degree in Music allows students to get a full range of freshman and sophomore music classes, including Music Theory and Ear Training, Applied Lessons, Music Composition, and Class Piano to name a few.

Many of these courses provide the skills necessary for a variety of careers in music, from music education to performance, and prepares the student for transfer to a four-year university.

ASU-BEEBE CONCERT-LECTURE SERIES
BRINGING ARTS & CULTURAL ICONS TO OUR COMMUNITY

The 2017-2018 school year saw a rebirth in interest in the arts and culture on the campus of ASU-Beebe. This was partly due to the community focus of the 90th events and more opportunities for people to come to the campus. Other changes also energized the creative juices and pulled the curtain back to reveal hidden gems.

ASU-Beebe’s Concert-Lecture series programs have been conducted for several years. However, this season saw a number of notable names amid the mix of band and choral concerts and live theater shows. Elizabeth Eckford, a member of the historic Little Rock Nine, highlighted the college’s recognition of Black History month. Eckford was one of the nine black students who integrated Little Rock Central High School in August of 1957. Later in March a noted Hollywood figure, actor Jeffrey Combs who has a significant cult following due to some of his roles in the Re-animator movies as well as recurring roles on the Star Trek – Deep Space Nine series, graced the stage at ASU-Beebe. Combs presented his one-man show called Nevermore, An Evening with Edgar Allen Poe before a packed house of fans that hailed from as far away as Louisiana and Ohio.

Another element that contributed greatly to the increased interest in the theater arts and live performance programs was the addition of Ryan Gibbons as Theater Director and instructor of communications and theater. With a B.S. and M.A. degrees in communications and theater, as well as more than 20-years experience with a traveling theater troupe, Gibbons stimulated student interest in the theater.

“I was new to ASU-Beebe last fall, so I was really interested to find out what we had, what we could do and how many students were involved,” Gibbons said. “I learned we didn’t have that many students in the degree program, but my first casting meeting resulted in more than 30 people responding.” But what really surprised Gibbons was what he learned about the facilities and capabilities.

ASU-Beebe is a hidden gem with the facilities of a fully integrated theater arts program, including a theater makeup program. The theater features a stage complex, a prop-shop, a well-outfitted costuming shop, an orchestra pit for live music, seating for 450, plus newly upgraded lighting and sound systems. Gibbons added that the unique thing about ASUB’s program is that students can walk in here and have immediate opportunities they wouldn’t get for several years in any other program.

But what Gibbons said excited him the most was the overwhelming interest in collaboration to create an integrated program of excellence.

“I wanted to talk to everyone with great ideas and interest in working together – from the music department, student groups, the marketing department and other faculty. This season has been fantastic,” Gibbons said.

With the spring semester full of well attended stage shows, band and choral concerts and ticketed Concert/Lecture programs, Gibbons said he has added a number of new students to the degree program and looks forward to continuing to produce and present shows the public will want to come see. His big goal – a full on-stage musical in the spring every year!
TO EL SALVADOR AND BACK!

ALL OF THE ASU-BEEBE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE FIELD TRIP OF A LIFETIME

All of the ASU-Beebe students came with open hearts and minds to El Salvador even though many of them had never been outside the U.S. It was amazing and moving to observe as they interacted with locals of all ages in such a friendly and unassuming way.

Jean Manes.

A group of 10 students and their instructor from Arkansas State University-Beebe recently returned from an eight-day student field trip to El Salvador.

This was the second ASU-Beebe student field trip to El Salvador led by instructor Eddie Supratman, who is assistant professor of World History and Comparative Religion. The students participating were: Jose Ross of Sherwood, Caleb Castleberry of Cabot, Kiersten Johanson of Jacksonville, Sherri Delong of Vilonia, Blake Brewer of Searcy, Lexie Haynie of Vilonia, Rebecca Roofener of Vilonia, Victoria Cook of Searcy, Corey Rogers of Cabot, and John Smith of Vilonia.

Each day was filled with rich cultural and historical discoveries. The group visited the Mayan ruins at Tazumal, Casa Blanca, Santa Leticia, and Joya de Cerén; an indigo workshop, El Boquerón Volcano National Park; a coffee plantation; Ruta de las Flores, which are towns with a mix of colonial and indigenous architectures; the beach resort where students enjoyed the Pacific Ocean for the first time; hiking Santa Ana volcano; and the Nahuat indigenous village in Santo Domingo de Guzman.

ASU-Beebe students visited the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador and were greeted and welcomed by Robyn Remeika, Cultural Affairs Officer, and Fernando Herrera, Cultural Specialist. At the embassy, students asked questions regarding El Salvador’s social, economic, and international affairs. In addition, Supratman and ASU-Beebe student Jose Ross later attended a theatrical event at the U.S. Embassy hosted by the U.S. Ambassador Jean Manes.

The students also participated in a local service project in partnership with UNICAES English Access students, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. The students also visited a local orphanage, Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos. Prior to the trip, ASU-Beebe faculty and staff in partnership with Disabled American Veterans, participated in the global project to donate clothes, hygiene products and school supplies to the orphanage. At the orphanage, ASU-Beebe and English Access students led the activities, such as basketball, volleyball, soccer and breaking piñatas.

Cristian Meléndez, director of the UNICAES English Department, assisted Supratman in planning activities for the ASU-Beebe students. Meléndez commented: “I really could see how they changed from the day they arrived to the day they departed. I enjoyed every day and every trip to the different places. The most remarkable part for me was when we visited Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos, and it was so nice to see ASU-Beebe students interacting with all the children in the orphanage.”

Supratman is currently collaborating with UNICAES and the U.S. Embassy on several projects as a direct result of the faculty led student field trips. “This trip has brought about many life transformations from the German professor, UNICAES English Access students, the orphans, and the ASU-Beebe students. It was definitely a once in a lifetime experience with long lasting impacts. I am very proud of our students: They represented themselves, ASU-Beebe and our country very well.”
“Students are really the purpose for our being, and these technology improvements are an integral part of our vision to continue to deliver quality education to our students, and meet industry demands for the caliber graduates that they expect.” — Chris Lee, Vice Chancellor for Information Technology

In this day and age technology drives most everything we do – in business and personally. This is especially true in higher education where today’s students arrive with a much higher understanding and expectation of technology in their college experience.

“We recognized several issues regarding our ability to keep pace with the information technology demands of students and, both online and classroom instruction needs, several years ago,” said Dr. Kerry Mix, provost and Chief Academics Officer at ASU-Beebe. “But like every organization we had to prioritize things in our budget planning.”

In the Summer of 2012, ASU-Beebe did something pretty unique and partnered with Educause to conduct an Information Technology Peer Review that resulted in the creation of a Chief Information Technology Position at ASU-Beebe. Chris Lee was recruited to that position in January of 2013 and became the Vice Chancellor for Information Technology Services at ASU-Beebe. He led the development of an ITS Strategic Plan with the assistance of the IT Committee. The plan was adopted by the Chancellor’s Council in late 2013 and laid out key IT principles and initiatives. This allowed ASU-Beebe to strategize and prioritize the implementation of a wide array of technology upgrades across all four campus locations. “It was a bit of the chicken and egg discussion,” said Lee. “The group had to establish a logical progression of implementation – and then pair that against budget requirements for several years.”

In implementing the ITS Strategic Plan the concentration on enterprise applications and a strategic focus on instructional and administrative technologies became the top three of ASU-Beebe’s - 7 Technology Initiatives. In the Fall of 2014, a User Group of key staff members, began evaluating software applications that offered: new student information systems (SIS), enterprise resource planner (ERP) tools and operated in a private, secure cloud environment. Fast-forward nearly 4 years and the results are: new Vanguard enterprise resource planner (ERP) tools and operated in a private, secure cloud environment. Additionally, and within that same time frame, ASU-Beebe upgraded its Learning Management System to Canvas, launched a new ASU-Beebe.edu web site, added six new digital distance learning systems called Zoom carts, upgraded its automated phone system and launched a new ASUB Mobile application.

ITS has also focused on virtualization both in the data center and in the computer labs, with new Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) that can serve up 900+ virtual desktop sessions. Additionally, significant effort has gone into upgrading all campuses’ network bandwidth. Beebe increased from 30/5 Mbps to 1/Gbps; Searcy and Heber Springs increased from 3/Mbps to 250/Mbps and the Little Rock Air Force Base upgraded from 5/Mbps to 50/Mbps.

“Today’s students, both traditional and non-traditional, prefer a mix of delivery methods for their educational needs,” said Mix. “Regardless of the type of degree or training program students are pursuing, they want to be able to access information at their own pace 24-7. With the advent of e-books, digital classroom support via student portals and distance or online class programs, students are able to access information and complete requirements right from their mobile phone or tablet.”

Although implementation of upgrades and training of users has been difficult in such a compressed timeframe, many students, faculty and even community observers note the impressive new look and accessibility of information across the ASU-Beebe platforms and systems.

“Students are really the purpose for our being,” Lee said. “So these technology improvements are an integral part of our vision to continue to deliver quality education to our students, and meet industry demands for the caliber of education they expect from our graduates. These projects have been extremely expensive, to the tune of approximately $4 million dollars over the last five years, but it is worth every penny to keep ASU-Beebe students competitive!”

During the 2016-2018 school years ASU-Beebe continued to tackle its technology gaps and initiated upgrades to systems, software, hardware, web-based, wireless and mobile applications which vastly improved user experiences at the college. But for the ITS team and many inter-departmental members it was a Herculean undertaking. In one year, ASU-Beebe converted to a new student information system (SIS) for student records and operations management, which meant upgrading hardware like servers, switches, wireless access ports and cabling. This infrastructure investment not only strengthened the institution’s technology portfolio, but it strategically positioned the school for growth in all areas of the business.

Additionally, the ITS team migrated and consolidated all students, faculty and staff to one email and productivity suite driven by Office 365.