UA System President Names Hughes to UAM Chancellor Post

LITTLE ROCK - University of Arkansas System President Donald Bobbitt announced today that he will recommend Karla Hughes, Ph.D., to the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas System as chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM).

Hughes, currently the executive vice president and provost of the University of Louisiana System in Baton Rouge, La., is UAM’s 12th chief executive officer and will begin Jan. 15, 2016.

“Our campus in Monticello is uniquely intertwined with its regional economic and community needs, and after a thorough search I am confident that Dr. Hughes’ skillset is an excellent fit and I know she will help lead the university toward an exciting future,” Bobbitt said. “She brings a wealth of experience operating in leadership roles and understands the benefits and challenges of operating within a large statewide university system for the betterment of the students and communities it serves.”

In her current position as executive vice president and provost of the largest university system in Louisiana, Hughes worked to support nine regional, comprehensive state universities that serve nearly 90,000 students with an annual budget of $750 million.

Her previous leadership also includes being selected as a year-long American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow with an initial semester-long placement in the Office of the President at the University of North Carolina System, which serves 17 institutions.
“I look forward to working with faculty and staff to help University of Arkansas at Monticello students succeed,” Hughes said. “I am grateful for this extraordinary opportunity to serve its students, faculty, staff and alumni as well as the citizens of Monticello and southeastern Arkansas. In addition, I want to express my appreciation to President Bobbitt, the search committee, members of the Boards of Visitors and Trustees, and to so many others who made me and my husband feel genuinely welcome during our recent visits to the University’s three campuses.”

During her career, Hughes has held academic appointments at the University of Missouri, Virginia Polytechnic and State (Virginia Tech), East Carolina, Kansas State, Middle Tennessee State, and Morehead State Universities, including three as a tenured professor, and has also developed professional relationships with faculty and administrators at six historically black universities.

In the 15 years that Hughes held statewide outreach appointments in Kansas and Missouri, she developed the first computerized programs for the Missouri Cooperative Extension, and her alternative agriculture enterprise was recognized by the University of Missouri System president as among the state’s 10-best economic development programs. She has been recognized for her outreach and coalition-building skills when the Intergenerational Community Center that she organized in 2004 through a partnership between a community college, city government and her college at East Carolina University earned the national Association of Public and Land-grant Universities’ C. Peter Magrath University/Community Engagement Award.

Hughes holds a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Agriculture (Animal Science/Food Safety) from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, as well as Master and Bachelor of Science Degrees in Nutrition and Food Science from Kansas State University. She has also completed postgraduate work at the University of Missouri-Columbia in personnel administration. When she left East Carolina University, she was granted professor emerita status. A full bio can be found here.

A search committee at UAM has been working with a national search firm, Witt-Kieffer, to identify candidates since Jack Lassiter announced he was stepping down last fall and ultimately retired Jan. 5. Lassiter became UAM’s 11th chief executive officer on July 1, 2004. Jay Jones, vice chancellor for finance and administration at UAM, has been serving as interim chancellor.

“I’d like to thank Mr. Jay Jones for his effective and steadfast leadership in the interim and all of the hard work the search committee, including Chair Mary Whiting, did to ensure that the future of UAM is in good hands,” Bobbitt said. “UAM is an integral part of the UA System and I am excited to see the institution continue its progress under Dr. Hughes’ guidance.”