History of East Central University

East Central University was established by legislative act in 1909 as one of three regional state normal schools founded that year in the eastern half of Oklahoma, that part which had been Indian Territory before the founding of the State in 1907. Three similar institutions had been established earlier in Oklahoma Territory, which became the western half of the new state. The six institutions for many years served virtually identical purposes in the state's program of higher education.

The normal school program consisted of four years of preparatory, or high school, work and two years at the college level. Graduates of the normal schools were awarded lifetime licenses for teaching in the public schools of the state. In 1919 the six state normal schools were authorized to increase their college programs to four years of teacher education and to confer bachelor's degrees. At that time they were designated teachers' colleges. In 1939 they were authorized to expand their programs to include degree programs in Arts and Sciences as well as Education, and the designation was changed to Oklahoma state colleges.

In 1954 East Central and the other Oklahoma State colleges were authorized to offer their first graduate work in a fifth-year program for teachers leading to the Master of Teaching degree. In 1969 the state colleges were authorized to change the name of this advanced degree from Master of Teaching to Master of Education. Other master's degrees have since been added.

In 1974 the Oklahoma State Legislature officially changed the name of East Central from East Central Oklahoma State College to East Central Oklahoma State University and in 1985 the official title became East Central University. The academic divisions of the university are the following: The Division of Arts and Letters; the School of Business; the School of Education and Psychology; the Division of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation; the School of Mathematics and Sciences; the Division of Social Sciences; and the Graduate School. The University also maintains The Center of Continuing Education and Community Services for the immediate use of the general public.

SOURCE: ECU CATALOG