



SPONSORSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Arkansas Tech University

Never settle. That's the phrase that greets you when you visit the Arkansas Tech home page, and it couldn't ring truer for the university or our own values here at Ramsey Education. We believe you shouldn't settle for a world where kids don't have access to financial education!

Arkansas Tech University (ATU) believes 100% in the importance of financial literacy, and that's why they chose to become a sponsor and provide the *Foundations in Personal Finance* curriculum to high school students all across the state of Arkansas.

According to Blake Bedsole, vice president of enrollment management at ATU, they "love the online curriculum and interface."

Even better, the curriculum also gives the university a way to help make sure students get the education they need to win with money beyond high school and college.

We're cheering on ATU for promoting financial literacy, affordability and a spirit of hard work—not only for current students but also for future generations whose lives will be impacted by this education. That's what we like to see!

We got the chance to talk with Blake to get the inside scoop on what ATU is all about and hear the why behind their *Foundations* sponsorship.

RAMSEY EDUCATION: How did you first learn about the *Foundations* curriculum, and how many schools are you sponsoring?

BLAKE BEDSOLE: As a *Financial Peace University* graduate, I was very familiar with Dave Ramsey and his work on overcoming personal debt. I wasn't aware of the Ramsey Education work, so when you reached out with an introduction to the financial literacy course geared toward high schools, I was intrigued to learn more. It seemed to be a perfect fit with our mission and vision here at Arkansas Tech, and I was happy to be able to sign on as a partner. We currently support 50 in-state high schools in Arkansas.

RAMSEY EDUCATION: Can you tell us a bit about what made you decide to become a sponsor? How does this sponsorship tie in to your mission at ATU?

BLAKE BEDSOLE: After learning more about the program, it didn't take much to make the decision that we wanted to participate. No different from the rest of the nation, financial literacy is not where we want it to be for our students. Arkansas actually has a state law passed in 2017 that requires "the development and implementation of personal finance standards for students" beginning in 10th grade, so this was a great way for us to help local schools meet that need.

Ties to the mission are everywhere. We talk about being "dedicated to student

success, access, and excellence," and 94% of our student body is Arkansan. We know that equipping at least some of our students with financial literacy at the high school level will make them more likely to persist and graduate, which is another part of our mission: "to inspire and empower members of the community to achieve their goals while striving for the betterment of Arkansas, the nation, and the world."

RAMSEY EDUCATION: In 2019, ATU ranked high on Washington Monthly's list of Best Bang for the Buck institutions of higher learning in the South. (That's amazing!) Why is affordability important to ATU, and what steps do you take to achieve it?

BLAKE BEDSOLE: Yes, absolutely—affordability and access drive every decision we make. In addition to being 94% Arkansan, our student body is over 30% Pell-eligible and almost 40% first generation. With those factors in mind, we know we have to do everything we can to control costs so that our students aren't set up to fail due to financial concerns.

RAMSEY EDUCATION: How have you seen your low tuition costs affect the lives of students and communities?

BLAKE BEDSOLE: You mentioned the Best Bang for the Buck ranking, and I think that's extremely important. We want to remain the best investment

possible for our students so they have the best chance to persist and complete. Another ranking that we are extremely proud of is being the number one school in Arkansas for providing social mobility. That ranking (published by CollegeNET) looks at the socioeconomic status of your entering students and then compares them to your graduation rates and early career salaries for graduates to get an idea of the immediate improvements provided by their education. We have led the category among Arkansas institutions for six consecutive years. No matter where you come from or what type of financial situation you may be in, ATU can help you succeed, and that makes us extremely proud.

RAMSEY EDUCATION: What impact do you expect this sponsorship to have on students, teachers and schools in Arkansas?

BLAKE BEDSOLE: We really see this as a service to the state of Arkansas. Regardless of a student's choice to pursue a college degree, or to enroll here at ATU, we see the benefit of improving financial literacy in our state and in doing it in a way that also helps out some of our K-12 partners. We've been thrilled with the responses from teachers, counselors and students that completed the course last year and look forward to seeing our sponsorship grow in the future.

RAMSEY EDUCATION: That's great to hear, Blake! We're thrilled to team up with ATU to help change students' lives, and we can't wait to see how the university continues to make a difference through this sponsorship.

To join the Arkansas Tech University and hundreds of other sponsors who are making a difference in their communities, go to ramseyeducation.com/sponsorships or contact your Sponsorship Advisor today.

help@ramseyeducation.com | 800.781.8914