

# School of Rock... and Country... and Pop...

By Lauren Hammack

Think about your own career. If you had known years ago what you know now, would you do things differently? Sure you would, but even the best collegiate experience pales in comparison to the ultimate classroom: real life.

The University of Central Oklahoma is bringing the “real life” element to the classroom by partnering with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to form the Academy of Contemporary Music. Scheduled to begin this fall, the landmark program, the first of its kind in the United States, features a curriculum focused on the music industry and is patterned after the original, highly acclaimed ACM in Guildford, England.

Nashville recording artist and Edmond native Devin Derrick wishes the ACM had been in place when he attended UCO in the 1990s. “It’s true that time and the street are the ultimate teachers,” Derrick acknowledges. “I would have loved it if someone had taught me the business side of this industry before I had to go out and learn it for myself,” he adds.

Derrick will be one of the Academy’s master teachers at the Bricktown-based campus, contributing to a hands-on, flexible curriculum that includes the business management, performance and production areas of the music industry.

Derrick’s inclusion in the ACM originated with its executive director, Scott Booker, manager of The Flaming Lips.



Devin Derrick

Booker, a fellow UCO alumnus, approached Derrick, who will serve as a spokesperson for the program. Derrick’s single “The Other Side of Five” is the featured song on a promotional DVD the ACM will send to thousands of U.S. high schools this spring to promote enrollment, which concludes in June.

Not surprisingly, student interest in the ACM has been significant, and the Academy’s location in Bricktown bodes well for the district’s entertainment possibilities in the months and years to come.

To learn more about the ACM at UCO, call 974.4700 or visit [www.acm.uco.edu](http://www.acm.uco.edu). ■